

★★★ **WOLLONGONG WOLVES** ★★★ *special FEATURE*

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH

SOCCER

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TONY PERINICH LEADS MILAN IVANOVIC



SOCCER BETTING — HOW TO PLAY

A Christmas Wish List

By BOB BROOKS

Tis the season to be jolly, or frivolous. What can we wish for our friends, if friends they be, in the Soccer fraternity?

For David Hill, a new pair of those coloured boots. He can wear them in celebrity games or at Bondi on sultry Sunday afternoons. They can be used for kicking backsides (butts are American) or for stirring around in the mud to come up with more highly publicised controversies.

For David Woolly, a magic ball to forecast which way Hill might take him.

For Odel or Terry Venables or as some folks say, Telly Vegetables, the magic formula to ensure Australia's qualifications for France 98. Maybe the patience of Job to deal with the doubting Thomases.

For Thommo and Tommy the gift of being able to change from O'day to Konichwa, once they've forgotten Hello Jimmy. Maybe the gift for Thommo to drop 'guy' and 'guys' for something more suitable.

For Les Scheinflug, a four week stay at home so that he can be refamiliarised with Mrs Scheinflug. Then a great Oceania Qualifier in Tahiti and a brilliant Under 20 World Cup Final Series.

For Raul Blanco the opportunity to be actively involved with Odel in order to promote the best that Australia has to offer.

For Sydney United a magnanimous nature to be able to welcome, all folks of all races, to their ground to enjoy their brilliant football and probable Ericsson Cup success.

To Brisbane Strikers the volume of crowds that those upstarts from the West are enjoying.

To Perth Glory a bigger squad and continued success both on and off the field. The gift of having to lock potential spectators out of Perth Oval.

To Wollongong City Wolves increased crowds to appreciate the great job the team is doing

on the field. May Nick Theodorakopoulos enjoy the fruits of his labours.

To South Melbourne Lakers continuing top crowds and the success of their attempts to link up with Sydney Swans fans. After that more improvements to Bob Jane Stadium.

To Marconi Fairfield Stallions a revival to the status the Club so richly deserves. Also agreement from Fairfield Council to their plans to expand Marconi Stadium.

To West Adelaide a continuing and expanding presence in the City of Churches in order to draw folks from a wider audience.

To Gippsland Falcons the latent supporters to come out from under their rocks and give the local team a big shock with 8,000 average crowds.

To Adelaide City a continuing excellence of play as enjoyed by true Soccer fans since 1977.

To exuberant UTS Olympic some modicum of playing success on the field. An end to old animities within the Club's direction. A closer and productive association with Canterbury Leagues Club.

To Collingwood Warriors the ability to pick themselves up, dust off the disappointments and track forward with confidence into the future.

To consecutive champions Melbourne Knights the strength to go on into the future as a truly cross cultural district club. A continuing magic to be able to produce champion players.

To Newcastle Topper Breakers crowds of 10,000 or more at the well appointed Breakers Stadium. The vision to pick out great players from the coalfields.

To Canberra Unisys Cosmos the amazing magic of a Lazarus. To be able to rise from the (almost) dead.

To the World Game, here in Australia, the motivation to elevate themselves from an also ran to its rightful place in the top echelons of sport in this country.

Merry Christmas

The Staff at Australian and British Soccer Weekly would sincerely like to wish all our Readers and Advertisers
**A Very Merry Christmas and
A Prosperous and Fulfilling
New Year**

Christmas deadlines. . .

ABSW will be published in slightly reduced form, on **Tuesday December 24** and **Tuesday December 31**.

Advertisements for these two editions must be in by **12 Noon on Friday December 20** and **12 Noon on December 27** respectively.

Some Match reports from **December 21** and **22** also **December 28** and **29** will be delayed in publication.

— Bob Brooks, Editor.

PIONEER HOMES NATIONAL INDOOR SOCCER LEAGUE

SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER, 1996 — SEMI FINALS

NSW Netball Centre, Church Street, Lidcombe (Televised Games)

- 4.00 pm WOMEN — SYDNEY CITY EAGLES v THE HILLS
- 5.30 pm MEN — SYDNEY CITY EAGLES v WESTERN SYDNEY SWANS
- 7.00 pm WOMEN — BLACKTOWN CITY RANGERS v BRISBANE
- 8.30 pm MEN — THE HILLS v CANBERRA VIPERS

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER, 1996 — FINALS

- 2.30 pm WOMEN FINAL — WINNERS OF SEMI FINALS (Televised Games)
- 4.00 pm MEN FINAL — WINNERS OF SEMI FINALS

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MATCH REPORTS



STRIKERS TOO HOT FOR COSMOS

Canberra Cosmos

1

By GRAHAM COOKE

Brisbane Strikers

4

Brisbane Strikers player-coach Frank Farina said his team had "set the record straight" with its 4-1 Ericsson Cupwin over Canberra Cosmos at Bruce Stadium on Saturday.

Brisbane made a dream start. With four minutes gone Cosmos defender George Sorras brought down Farina in the penalty area and Alan Hunter slammed the spot kick into the left hand corner of the net.

The man standing between Canberra and a first-half hammering was goalkeeper Danny Milosevic. Just three minutes after conceding the penalty he needed all his height to claw down an attempted chip by Reece Tollenaere. Then a defence splitting pass from Rod Brown found Farina through with just the goalkeeper to beat. Milosevic played the situation to perfection, forcing the former Soccerroo star to go wide. When Farina did get his shot in, the angle was narrow and Milosevic was able to push the ball into the side netting.

With half an hour gone the Cosmos were back in the game. Andy Brayshaw handled Paul Dee's cross in front of goal and Norman Kelly showed Canberra can take penalties as well by driving his shot past Graham Ross.

The Cosmos' woes continued when striker Marko Perinovic, playing his first match since an ankle injury in October, was sent off after a clash with Glen Gwynn. Brisbane regained the lead four minutes after halftime with the third penalty of the match. Cosmos players protested to referee Greg Leverton that Farina had taken a dive while contesting the ball with Richard Watson. Leverton maintained the striker's heels had been clipped. Hunter got his second from the spot.

Two Brisbane goals in four minutes killed the game. Farina slid the ball past a hopelessly exposed Milosevic in the 62nd minute then slick approach work by Danny Wright and Kasey Wehrman was finished by Rod Brown. Farina praised his side for overcoming one of soccer's great hurdles - playing against ten men.

"We kept possession, moved the ball from side to side and exploited the space."

It was the ground where the soccer world first began to take note of Frank Farina, so perhaps it was appropriate for one of Australia's best known soccer players to talk about his hopes and fears for the future. Well over a decade ago Farina made his National League debut for the then

Canberra City Olympians, and it was certainly no fault of the talented youngster straight out of the Australian Institute of Sport that that team was heading for the scrap heap. Olympians faded into oblivion, and Farina made his name with other clubs, both in Australia and Europe.

Now in charge of Brisbane Strikers, and relaxing after his team had handed a 4-1 thumping to Canberra Cosmos at Bruce Stadium, he talked of getting back into the national scene as a coach.

"Of course I would love to do that, but the national team job is well and truly sewn up with Terry Venables, and I wouldn't think there was too much money left over," he said.

Even so, appointment as an assistant, or to one of the age-group teams would still delight him. "And as soon as possible," he said. "It's bull—t when people say you have to wait around and serve your apprenticeship, I've done that by playing overseas for eight years and by coming through the ranks in Australia."

"I'm not sure what openings will come along, but when they do you can bet I'll be throwing my hat in the ring."

"I'm knocking on the door, it's up to Soccer Australia whether they want to open it."

Canberra Cosmos: Milosevic, Dee, Millin, Watson, Garcia, Kelly, Perinovic, Buljan (Lemezina 55), Koch, Sorras, Juric.

☆☆☆

Brisbane Strikers: Ross, Gwynne, Hunter, Phillips, Farina (Knipe 71), Brown (Battistin 76), Wright, Cranney, Brayshaw, Wehrman (Hews 79), Tollenaere.

Scorers: Cosmos: Kelly (30 pen).

Strikers: Hunter (4, 49 pens), Farina (62), Brown (66).

Yellow cards: Cosmos: Koch (19), Perinovic (21), Juric (70), Garcia (82).

Strikers: Hunter (40), Wehrman (56).

Red cards: Cosmos: Perinovic (41).

Crowd: 1,000.

Referee: G Leverton.
FOY: 3-Wehrman (BS), 2-Farina (BS), 1-Hunter (BS).



Alan Hunter, Buried two spot kicks for the Strikers.



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If you require more information and a full itinerary of this tour please contact one of the official travel operators. Complete the coupon below and send to your nearest Tour operator.

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MATCH REPORTS

MARCONI SCRAMBLES OVER BRAVE NEWCASTLE

Marconi

2

By JOHN ECONOMOS

Newcastle Breakers

1

Marconi at long last broke their home ground duck last Saturday night when they scraped to a 2-1 win over a most defiant and courageous Newcastle Breakers at the Marconi Stadium. Following three losses and a draw at home in their last four outings Marconi's win brought much needed relief to the players, coaching staff and their success starved supporters.

Central midfielder Brad Maloney opened the "innings" in the 20th minute. Right midfielder Craig Foster raided up the left, crossed to striker Francis Awaritefe who failed to connect in centre box, but fortunately Maloney on the far side smacked into the target a low drive from fourteen

metres.

In the second innings Marconi doubled their lead when first half substitute Luke Casserly crossed from the left for midfielder Vlado Zoric climbing high on the first post to score with a powerful downward header in the 59th.

Ten minutes later the Topper Breakers bravely struck back. Midfielder, Robbie Ironside pumped a through ball for talented central midfielder Troy Halpin to nail the far corner of the frame from fifteen metres.

Halpin's goal instantly injected Newcastle with a large dose of adrenalin that had Marconi clinging desperately on the ropes. Halpin had started the match in the strike line alongside lanky target man Clayton

Zane, but four minutes before scoring dropped back into the midfield when coach John Kosmina brought on substitute striker Jason Bennett to join Zane up front.

Inspired by Halpin's magnificent display, Zane in the 78th minute unleashed a rocket on target but Marconi's keeper Bobby Catlin made a fine save to deny Newcastle a most desperately needed equaliser.

In the last 10 minutes it was all Newcastle who virtually ran over the top of a brittle Marconi. The home side barely hung on to keep the Novacastrians out.

First Ironside burst into the box in a one-on-one with Catlin but blasted over the top, then Zane again threatened from point blank but his effort

was deflected off target.

So furious was Newcastle's second half onslaught that Marconi's industrious marksman Awaritefe, repeatedly raced back very deep, on three occasions well inside his own box, to help bolster the defence against the visitors' fury.

Playing without their suspended star central marker Dominic Longo, Schaefer elected to retain Mathew Bingley as a lateral defender with Robbie Stanton and the durable Paul Souris picking up.

A relieved Schaefer after the match abruptly reflected, "This was not a classic match by any means, but a 2-1 win, our first home win, thank you very much."

An understandably

disappointed Newcastle coach, John Kosmina, laconically evaluated, "We did more than enough in the first half to win it easily. We have to play with intensity from the very start as we are too comfortable early."

"Based purely on chances we created, we did far more than they did."

Awaritefe's highly energetic performance embracing attacking as well as defensive duties plus central marker Souris and the ever reliable goalkeeper Catlin, did best for Marconi whilst Newcastle were best served by the highly constructive Halpin and twin central markers Todd McManus and Matt Austin.



Marconi: Catlin; Stanton, Souris, Bingley, Renaud; Foster (Ravanello 73), Maloney, Zoric; Babic, Harper, Awaritefe (Holst 85).
Newcastle: Baker; Austin, McManus, Pryce, Sprad; Moore (Roberts 46), Thomas, Ironside, Wilson (Bennett 65); Zane, Halpin.
Scorers: Marconi; Maloney (20), Zoric (59).
Newcastle: Halpin (69).
Yellow Cards: Marconi; Awaritefe (84).
Newcastle: Pryce (7), Sprad (25), Thomas (53).
Referee: J Markovski.
Crowd: 4,111.
POY: 3-Halpin (NB), 2-Awaritefe (MF), 1-McManus (NB).

GLORY ONSLAUGHT CONTINUES

Perth Glory

3

By RICHARD KREIDER

Wollongong City

1

A second double in as many weeks to scoring sensation, Bobby Despotovski set up Perth Glory for a stirring 3-1 victory over Wollongong City at Perth Oval last Saturday, before a record 10,281 attendance.

The win was the third in a row for Glory, one that in turn halted a six match unbeaten run by the Wolves, who now have slipped into seventh place on the Ericsson Cup standings.

"Just two hours before kick-off I received the news that Gavin Wilkinson was unavailable because of a mysterious stomach complaint, and I thought that it might have an intimidating effect on the team," said Perth Coach Gary Marocchi. "But I should not have worried because Doug Ithier settled in

well and as it turned out, played a big part in our win."

Ithier's influence began after just 40 seconds when he pumped a perfect ball out of defence to Vas Kalogeracos, who then lined up Paul Strudwick to drill the ball home with his favourite left foot.

The home side continued to pepper the Wolves danger zone and eventually went two up in the 25th minute through Despotovski who latched onto a trade mark long throw from Strudwick at the back post.

But four minutes later, Wollongong were allowed back in the game when the one and only slip in concentration for the steadily improving Perth rearguard, enabled Lujpico Naumovski to bulge the roof of the net with a close range loose ball.

Any ideas the visitors had



of upsetting Glory in front of their large and intimidating audience, vanished in the 35th minute.

Despotovski sidestepped his marker on the edge of the box to almost effortlessly steer the ball past Brett Hughes for his ninth goal of the season.

The Wolves showed more commitment after the break, but were constantly repelled by the solid Perth backline of Ithier, Vinko Buljubasic, Craig Naven and the unflappable Vince Matassa who pulled off many crucial saves throughout the second

half.

Naumovski, Matt Horsley, Neil Harlock and substitute Mike Karamis were the pick of the Wolves pack that played well.

The only sour note for Perth was with Kalogeracos who limped off with a foot injury seven minutes from time after a one on one collision with the Wolves custodian who also suffered the same fate. Hughes however, elected to remain in the game since there was no substitute 'keeper.



Perth Glory: Matassa, C Naven, Buljubasic, G Naven, Miller, McVittie, Strudwick, Despotovski, Ithier, Kalogeracos (Vukmirovic 83), Wingell (Beretovc 74).

Wollongong City: Hughes, Ceccoli, Van Egmond, Bourke (Surjan 53), Horsley, Sevin, Naumovski, Reda, Harlock, Joskeski (Chippierfield 45), Lloyd (Karamis 64).
Scorers: Glory: Strudwick (1), Despotovski (25, 35), Wolves: Naumovski (29).
Yellow cards: Wolves: Van Egmond (16).
Referee: E Leanne.
Crowd: 10,281.
POY: 3-Buljubasic (PG), 2-Despotovski (PG), 1-Ithier (PG).

ZEBRAS DEMOLISH WARRIORS

Collingwood Warriors

1

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

Adelaide City

3

Collingwood Warriors defensive frailties were once again exposed as they were beaten 3-1 at home by Adelaide City.

The Warriors were reduced to ten men from the 27th minute when Rick Cerrachio picked up a second yellow card after a reckless clash with Dino Mennillo.

That turned the game Adelaide's way as Leigh Tsoumerkas, in for his first game of the season, switched to sweeper but found it a bit too much.

Carlo Talladira gave an early indication that Collingwood might turn their form around when he struck the bar with Jason Petkovic well beaten. Alex Tobin then repeated the dose with a terrific left foot volley after Frank Juric had punched out John Gibson's cross.

The Zebras took the lead five minutes after Cerrachio was given his marching orders. Michael Brooks threaded a through pass, which was let go by the Collingwood defence, for

Mennillo to stab the ball past Juric despite a late attempted tackle from Dean Fak.

Warriors skipper, Kimon Taliadoros, missed a golden opportunity when he failed to connect properly with a Mark Silic centre. Taliadoros' blushes were spared within a minute when he crashed in a left foot curler from the edge of the area.

Collingwood fans were still celebrating their teams equaliser when Brooks waltzed past Tsoumerkas and slotted home.

As hard as the Warriors tried, they just couldn't break down the experienced Zebras defence. Taliadoros did come close but City's possession football frustrated the Warriors at every attempt of an equaliser.

Mennillo capped off a fine game with a spectacular goal in the last minute. Taking Mark Yates' ball forward he turned Talladira before firing a shot low into the left hand corner of Juric's net.

Warriors coach Zoran Matic said that his



inexperienced defence, combined with Cerrachio's expulsion led to his sides demise.

"It was asking a lot for them to run around for the whole game more or less. They (Adelaide) are not a bad team, they had an extra man and can play defensively. They fixed us up. Those two first goals were presents, but that's the problem when you don't have an experienced defence.

"But there will be a

solution to this. We will work harder, I might find some more quality players, you never know."



Warriors: Juric, Fak, Tsoumerkas (Jolevski 84), Cerrachio, Talladira, Vlahos (Boutsianis 72), Taliadoros, Tapai, Silic, MacNicol, Scott.

☆☆☆
Zebras: Petkovic, Armour, Yates, Ivanovic, Tobin, Costanzo (Pirone 88), Mennillo, Gibson, Musitano (Salapadidis 63), Brooks (Barbaro 76), Brazzale.
Scorers: Warriors: Taliadoros (41), Zebras: Mennillo (33, 90), Brooks (42).
Yellow Cards: Warriors: Cerrachio (13), Talladira (78), Zebras: Brazzale (26), Mennillo (39).
Red Cards: Warriors: Cerrachio (27).
Referee: M Shield.
Votes: 3-Mennillo (AC), 2-Gibson (AC), 1-Armour (AC).
Crowd: 3,655.

ERICSSON CUP MATCH REPORTS

LEADERS OVERCOME FIGHTING FALCONS

Gippsland Falcons 1 Sydney United 2

Sydney United had its first win at the home of Gippsland Falcons tonight, taking the Ericsson Cup encounter 2-1.

A goal by Ante Milicic in the 84th minute sealed the game for the league leaders who had been under tremendous pressure from the gutsy Falcons.

The first half was marred by heavy marking with neither side managing to capitalise on chances until the 27th minute.

Sydney's Robert Enes showed a touch of class in winning the ball just inside the penalty box. He sidestepped two opponents and fired the ball past keeper Jim Kourtis to give United the lead.

The Falcons were unlucky not to equalise in the 30th minute when the Pumas keeper Zeljko Kelic was caught out of position but Esala

Masi's shot missed the upright by millimetres.

In the second half, the home side took the initiative and opened up the game. Sydney looked rather sluggish, its big guns David Zdrilic and

Paul Bilokapic were kept at

Gippsland Falcons:
Kourtis, Stergiopoulos, Mangos, Palamaras, Foy (Gimenez 87), Duric, Masi, Bell, Gotis (Wright 87), Hastie, Osman (Masi 87).

☆☆☆

Sydney United:
Kalac, Trajkovski (Cvetko 65), Kupresak, Babic, Enes, Marusic, Moric (Markovac 77), Milicic, Zdrilic, Bilokapic, Rudan.

Yellow Cards: Falcons: Mangos (60), Osman (65), United: Enes (51), Rudan (55), Bilokapic (78), Marusic (87).

Scorers: Falcons: Masi (57), United: Milicic (8), Enes (28).

Referee: G Connolly.

Crowd: 2,579.

POY: N/A at time of print.

bay by their markers Clayton Bell and Will Hastie.

At the 60th minute Alex Duric, who, along with Masi were the Gippslanders' most creative players, set up the latter who scored

for the home side.

The game seemed destined



Robert Enes: Put away Pumas second goal.

for a draw until six minutes from time when Milicic, who had been having a poor game, broke through and slid the ball under Kourtis for the winner.

Falcons coach Frank Arok praised both sides for what he described as "incredible commitment. He said, "They capitalised on two defence mistakes committed by us and

scored two goals. The league leaders were truly tested. We didn't deserve to lose."

Sydney United coach Branko Culina praised the home side: "The Falcons were pumped, it was a tough win for us. I was very impressed with the Falcons as a team, especially strikers Duric and Masi."

MARK READ'S GUIDE TO SOCCER BETTING (PT. 2) HANDICAP BETTING

If you've ever thought that a well fancied team were likely to be troubled by the outsider in a match, but weren't confident enough to back the underdogs in a straight forward win bet, then 'handicap' betting is for you.

When you have a bet on a soccer match the game can have one of three possible outcomes:

1. Home win
2. Away win, or
3. Draw

Handicap betting gives you the opportunity to play slightly safer by turning the match into a two horse race. This is achieved by giving the underdog a headstart involving half a goal. Because it is impossible for the opposition to score half a goal the match between the 2 teams has to have an outright winner. Therefore, if you've backed a team which has been given a half goal head start, you win if they win the game and you win if they draw. In effect, you are backing the favourites not to win.

For example, if Sydney United were playing Collingwood the betting may be:

1/2 Sydney United 5/2 Draw 9/2 Collingwood

But after giving Collingwood a half goal head start the betting changes to:

1/2 Sydney United 11/8 Collingwood

So in this case, a Collingwood supporter would be able to back his team to get some points at Sydney without having to have a bet on both the draw and a Collingwood win. An \$80 bet on Collingwood with a half goal start would win him \$110 profit on his stake, giving him \$190 to pick up.

Of course you don't always have to back the outsider in handicap betting. As a Sydney United fan you think that your team is going to beat Collingwood by at least two clear goals. Darwin All Sports also offer handicap betting with one and a half goal starts:

5/4 Sydney United (-1 1/2 goals) 10/19 Collingwood (+1 1/2 goals)

For a \$40 stake you can collect \$90 - a profit of \$50 by backing Sydney United giving up a one and a half goal start.

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5/4 Marconi	9/4 UTS Olympic	7/4
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Support for SIMUNIC

Dear Sir,
I would like to offer my support to Joe Simunic about his decision to choose Croatia. First of all, we don't know all the facts behind his decision and some people are treating him as if he is a traitor with all the fuss about taxpayer's money, allegiance, and being money hungry etc.

Who in this present world is not looking after number one? Let's be not hypocritical. How many people leave for lucrative jobs after they have completed university or something similar in this country?

And as for a scholarship at the AIS? The AIS is doing alright, they have a very good name outside this country, so a good player coming from them gives Australia a good

name. Let me give you a couple of examples.

Before Paul Okon became known I recommended him to a Dutch club manager who was here to finalise the contract of Fred de Jong from Marconi. I talked to him and spoke about Paul. He said that he preferred a youngster from the AIS!

This is a middle ranked club in Holland, yet, they knew about the AIS!

A year later after Paul and the Young Socceroos did so well in Portugal the coach rang me at 2.00am our time. I told him that Paul Okon was more interested in Bruges.

Let's give young Simunic a break.

Gerry van Duuren,
UWS, WESTMEAD.

LOYALTIES LIE IN FOREIGN LAND

Dear Sir,
Shame on you Joe Simunic and shame on those who enticed you to go.

You were born and raised in this beautiful, free country. Your childhood was uninterrupted by wars or racial hatred. You were educated here. You learnt your football here. You used for your own advancements one of the world's best sports development centres in the AIS. Millions of taxpayers worked hard to give you this privilege.

Despite all of this, for some inexplicable reason you decide that your loyalties lie in a foreign land on the other side of the world.

You could at least be up front about your reasons. The

"I need to play for Croatia to gain overseas exposure" just doesn't wash. You can play overseas without thumbing your nose at Australia. There are about a hundred such precedents. Did Frank Farina have to play for Italy in order to land an overseas contract? See Joe, the numbers just don't add up.

There is one positive to come out of this sorry saga Joe. We'll all rejoice when, at a future tournament, a Bosnich or a Kalac snatches one of your crosses out of the air and a Wehrman, a Curejia or a Zane slips past you to slot home the winner and knock you and your Croatian buddies out of the World Cup.

Stephen Plummer,
CALOUNDRA, QLD.

A matter of opinion

Dear Sir,
Henry Wiggier's 'The Prima Donna Factor' article would have to rank as one of the most ill-informed and ignorant pieces of Soccer journalism ever printed. He seems to brand every overseas based player a prima donna on the basis that the ABSW has difficulty getting a response from some of them and then proceeds to do a hatchet job on these players based not on facts but on his personal opinion and a speculative opinion at that and decides that they are overpaid and do nothing for the local Australian scene. Excuse me Mr Wiggier but wasn't that Mark Bosnich who appeared on the high rating Sydney Footy Show on Channel 9 promoting the Travellers vs True Blues game, not to mention appearances on Channel 10 and Channel 7's Sportsworld as well as a radio interview with Tracey Holmes on the ABC's Grandstand show?

I believe Ned Zelic also did the Soccerab ads for free out of his love for

Soccer and wasn't that Aurelio Vidmar on the Middy show with Paul Wade promoting the Travellers vs the True Blues game. Whether Mr Wiggier likes to admit it or not it is the players who bring life to Soccer not journalists who specialise in generalisations and it is the overseas based Aussie players who are bringing a higher profile to soccer and making it more viable and visible to the stars of tomorrow.

I have noticed there is a new Soccer publication on the market that prefers to judge players on their performances and basic facts instead of hostile personal opinion and speculation and while Mr Wiggier continues to write rubbish such as The Prima Donna Factor the other paper will be my preferred publication.

L Anich,
PRESTONS, NSW.

Editors Note: Providing letters are constructive then they have a chance of getting published. Criticism, if well founded, is always welcome.

Letters to the Editor

Have your say on any soccer issue in the world. Preference will be given to short letters. Include daytime phone number for verification.



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Short letters of about 400 words will be given preference in this column.

The opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper

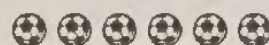
Help Requested from PACIFIC ISLAND

Dear Sir,
I need your assistance for my sports club. Please sir we need Australian and British Soccer Weekly information, and if you are able to assist us. Please send copies of your paper to the above address.

Your kind assistance is very much appreciated.
Thank you.

Ezekiel Tuaroto,
SOLOMON ISLAND.

Editors Note: Readers will be happy to know that we have sent copies of ABSW to Ezekiel. He and his friends can now read original material, warts and all, about the World Game.



Commission pays for AIS stint

Dear Sir,
I am a zealous football fanatic who enjoys reading your great newspaper and keeping up to date with the current head-lining issues. The most recent controversial topics circulating the media and sporting public alike are the employment of Terry Venables as Australia's national coach and the decision by Joe Simunic to play for Croatia as opposed to Australia.

I for one am very proud of the decision Simunic has made because I am of Croatian origin but also because I realise that his decision will serve to enhance his career as a football player on the international scene. Isn't that every player's dream? Croatia is currently ranked 22 in the world after only being on the football scene as an independent republic for a few years. They are an excitingly, fresh new football country with talent spread across Europe from the English to the Spanish to the Italian leagues. The only thing they lack is young talent to acquire and further develop.

Australia on the other hand has hardly advanced from its meagre 50s rating in the last

few years. How can one in all seriousness argue that Simunic can achieve a fully satisfying football career if he plays for Australia? Sure, there are a number of Australian nationals playing in Europe but apart from the Bosnichs, Zelic and Vidmars the others play for relative unknowns.

Soccer Australia can remonstrate that hard-earned taxpayers money has gone into the development of Simunic as a player. What they conveniently forget to disclose is that they will receive a 10 per cent commission if Simunic is sold overseas. This more than makes up for the money consumed at the AIS. Puts a new perspective on the money debate doesn't it?

However, the most obvious hypocrisy of all seems to be missed by all the opinion-makers and holders. Soccer Australia are incensed that Simunic's heart yearns to play for Croatia, yet they hire an Englishman to govern football here in Australia. There is absolutely no person here who can look me in the eye and convince me that Terry Venables' heart will be solely devoted to Australia,

especially if the day arrives when this country must face England at international level. Just out of curiosity, have Soccer Australia suddenly won the lottery that they can afford to pay Venables so much money for being here only 4 months a year?

To finish off, I was outraged by the letters sent in by D Winter and S Predy (03/12/96) concerning Les Murray and Johnny Warren. Although I may not always agree with the opinions they present, I respect their ability to stand up for what they believe in, despite harsh adversity from the likes of Mr Hill. They are not here to simply inform us about the facts, that is the job of news programs, but to provide different angles on important issues. I suggest you switch channels or even sports if you cannot handle their boldness and mannerisms. After all, football is all about opinions isn't it?

Matija Raspudic,
AVONDALE HTS., VIC.



"Where's the referee gone?"

THE ONLY SOLUTION

Dear Sir,
It is sad that a talent like Simunic's should be lost to Australia.

As Kimon Talliadoras rightly says, the solution to Australia's problems with players like Simunic, is to provide a real career path for them.

There is no reason to believe that the current Bricsson League fills the bill. In twenty years of operation our national league has not generated one fully professional club with the finances to offer its players the career path Kimon (and his players) envisages.

Last season's expanded competition worked well for Rugby which fielded three Australian sides - New South Wales, Queensland and ACT. However SA would look for at least five sides - one each from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. New Zealand might be asked to field teams based on Wellington and Auckland. That makes seven. In a ten-team competition we could have

Djakarta, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur or perhaps Johannesburg, Durban and Capetown or we could extend to fourteen clubs and include all of the above plus, say, Fiji.

There are two ways of approaching this scheme. It could be run in our winter, leaving the current national competition intact. Alternatively, it could be designed to fit in with the Asian competitions even though this might lead to clashes with our own.

As Australian business turn toward Asia - the growing sector of the world market - there will be more and more opportunities for sponsorship, certainly more than in Africa. Any investment in an expanded competition which includes Asian teams would be a sound one. You have only to look at the growth of the game in Japan to appreciate the potential.

Come to think of it, maybe the Japanese should be our first targets.

Alan Tedinnick,
NEW LAMBTON, NSW.

Thomson's legacy

Dear Sir,
Those that still think Eddie Thomson did a great job should ponder the figures in the Australian Sports Commission allocations to Olympic sports recently.

The Olyroos efforts under Eddie resulted in a drop in funding from \$1,563,430 in 1995/96 to \$1,366,061 in 96/97 and again down to \$1,264,504 for 1997/98, a total loss over two years of \$298,926. Add Eddie's wages, and Terry Venables'

payments look like real top value.

The ladies, however, had their allocation boosted from \$635,000 to \$1 million. Thanks to Tom Sermanni.

What was the loss to Australian Soccer of Eddie's unbelievable decision to play at home against Argentina first in the World Cup qualifiers?

I hope he does well in Japan - and stays there.

George Green,
ALSTONVILLE, NSW.

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ERICSSON CUP

MATCH REPORTS

CIANTAR RARE GOAL GIVES OLYMPIC WIN

UTS Olympic

1

By JOHN ECONOMOS

Melbourne Knights

0

Here come the Young Socceroos

The Young Socceroos will be short of time to enjoy their Christmas presents, as they fly out of Sydney on December 27.

A squad of 25 have been named which will be brought down to a travelling team of 18 for the Oceania Qualifiers.

Les Scheinflug arrived back late last week from the U/17 South American tour. He'll have little time to catch up with friends at home, before jetting off once more across the International Date Line with a fine outfit.

Papeete, capital of Tahiti, is the venue for the Qualifying Tournament. The Young Socceroos open their campaign against Fiji on Saturday January 4.

New Zealand are the opposition two days later with the game against the hosts, Tahiti rounding off the preliminary games on Wednesday January 8.

On Friday January 10 the winner of the group meets the second place getter with a spot in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at stake.



Kasey Wehrman: The Brisbane Striker teenager hopeful of selection.



Michael Curcija: Another teenager hopeful in the Young Socceroos squad.

Here is the preliminary squad:

Simon Colosimo, Hayden Foxe, Ante Seric (AIS); Michael Frone, Kostas Salapatsis (Adelaide City); Danny Milosevic, Michael Garcia, Peter Baljan (Canberra Cosmos); Harry Kewell (Leeds United); Lucas Nelli (Millwall); Clayton Zane (Newcastle Breakers); Brett Emerton, Ivan Zelic, Carlos Gonzalez (UTS Olympic); Kasey Wehrman (Brisbane Strikers); Andrew McDermott (Queens Park Rangers); Con Riatsis, Billy Damianos, Tasei Baser, Michael Curcija (South Melbourne); Andrew Vargas, Peter Zols (VTS); Nathan Wildy, Rehsah Mezensot (West Adelaide); Sebastian Sinovic (Wollongong City).

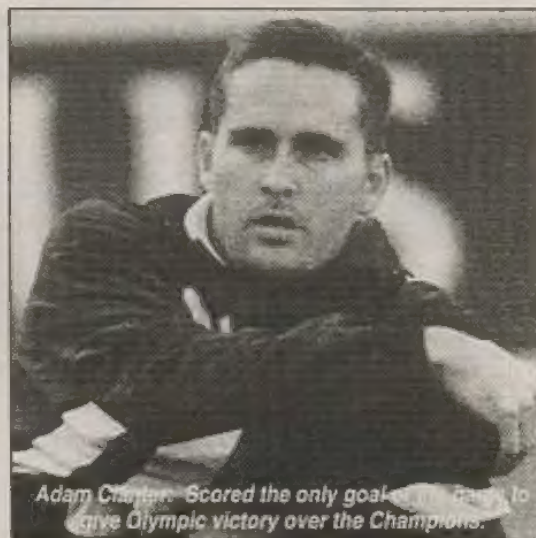
UTS Olympic's uninspiring slender but nevertheless valuable, 1-0 win over visiting current League champions Melbourne Knights last Sunday at Belmore Oval, enabled them to edge one place up the ladder to climb back into the Top Six.

Having gone without victory in their last three outings Olympic's sole goal arrived on the hour mark from the most unlikely scorer, yet very reliable centre-back, Adam Ciantar.

A corner slung in from the right by the hard working striker Norm Tome, found Ciantar climbing high, but well out on the back post. The Knights' goalkeeper Joe Didulica erroneously came out, failed to cut off the cross, and Ciantar most gratefully lobbed his header into the far corner of the target.

Since winning the Grand Final the League champions have been severely ravaged the sale of Spiteri and Tiatto overseas and Frank Juric to Collingwood. In addition they have astring of injuries plus a string of injuries most notably, Ollie Pondeljak and Adrian Cervinski, which has left the Knights' armoury severely dent.

This player drain has left coach Ian Dobson in dire straits as his once high-riding Knights, have already been unsaddled five times in 10 crusades, as they plunge down the League ladder almost weekly to their current, and most unrespectable, third spot from bottom.



Adam Ciantar: Scored the only goal to give Olympic victory over the Champions.

Worse still, with the pending overseas sale of Josip Simunic, their situation could compound to levels of crisis.

Olympic's stand-in skipper, the fiery Nick Meredith, blasted a vicious left footed 30 metre free-kick as early as the 6th minute which barely screamed over the Knight's horizontal woodwork.

The Victorians gallantly stung back in the 15th minute as pacey right midfielder Tommy Pondeljak strongly raided down the flank. Shooting on target on the run, Pondeljak was denied by Olympic's alert custodian Tony Franken who could only parry the hot drive. Normally lethal striker Ice Kutlesovski latched onto the rebound but inexplicably went millimetres wide of the base of the left post with his side footed flat volley.

Tome in the 22nd minute

also went very close when his brilliant left-footed drive on the turn from 14 metres screamed just over the bar and then it was Kris Trajanovski laid back to young attacking left midfielder Carlos Gonzalez, but his effort was well blocked by Didulica.

The match failed to reach any great heights and slowly developed into long ball breakaway tactics, (especially in the second half), upfront hoping for a break-through.

The energetic Tome who was buzzing, burst into the clear in the 79th minute. But as he looked likely to score with only the 'keeper to beat, Tome's final blast although on target, was well parried by goalkeeper Didulica.

Instantly from the rebound the Knights launched a counter attack that in seconds saw Pondeljak streaking away at the other end. But the

UTS Olympic:

Franken, Bove (Angelovski 68), Ciantar, Meredith, Blagojevic, Edwards, Emerton, Tsekens, Gonzalez (Ardone 68), Tome, Trajanovski.

Melbourne Knights:

Didulica, D.Cervinski, Markovski, Simunic, Pondeljak, Marth, Biskic (Deak 68), Kovacevic (Tsitsakis 68), Banjini, Kutlesovski, Tropkovic (Vojtek 81).

Scorer: Olympic: Ciantar. (60)

Yellow Cards: Olympic: Meredith (10), Emerton (75). Knights: Simunic (24), Kovacevic (63), Tsitsakis (78).

Referee: B.Hugo.

Crowd: 4834

P.O.Y. 3-Tome (UO), 2-D.Cervinski (MK), 1-Markovski (MK).

mobile midfielder's threatening raid was abruptly halted on the side line by a great covering tackle from the Olympic captain, Meredith.

Dobson was philosophical after the match stating, "We performed well as I used four 18 year olds, but to do the real job they were not ready for it yet. We could not penetrate well in the final third and our back-up goalkeeper came out for a ball he had no chance of getting.

"Anyhow it was end to end stuff and in reality it could have gone either way," the always emphatically honest Dobson ended.

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AROUND THE CLUBS

Knights face striking challenge

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

The Knights, with goalscoring problems aplenty at the moment, have missed out on signing Brian Bothwell.

Bothwell, a former Gippsland Falcons player, has signed a new contract for Brunei playing in the Malaysian league.

Brunei offered Bothwell a substantial pay rise after he had told the club of the Knights offer.

Joe Spiteri however, is likely to join the club for a three match stint while in Melbourne during the Austrian League's winter break.

The Knights had managed just seven goals in nine games prior to the game against UTS Olympic, only Joe Simunic and Ico Kutlesovski had scored more than one.

John Markovski, who has not scored this season, has been dropped from the senior squad until he sorts out his problems on and off the park.

Markovski has netted just



Joe Spiteri: In Oz for Australian winter break, could he turn out for Knights?

three times since joining the Knights at the start of last season.

He had been on the bench for three games which coach Ian Dobson hoped might buck him up. Instead his form has deteriorated with his

replacement, Mijo Trupkovic, playing impressively in his place.

So it's back to the youth team until coach Ian Dobson feels he is ready to be once again considered for the first team.

WARRIORS WORK ON DEFENCE

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

After Alex Pryhodko's arrival, Collingwood have further strengthened their defensive stock with the acquisition of Dejan Kaplanovic.

A 205cm defender, Kaplanovic comes to the club on loan from Wollongong City where he did not fit into the plans of Nick Theodorakopoulos.

He has played at the highest level in Yugoslavia with Buducnost. The Warriors have the option to make the move permanent.

Kaplanovic however, failed to make an impression in the Warriors 7-0 hiding by Sydney United and is unlikely to get another opportunity for some time.

Pryhodko also experienced problems in that same game. Language difficulties gave Pryhodko a hard time in his sweeper position but he will more than likely play a more important role than Kaplanovic.

Another defender



Collingwood had been targeting, Mehmet Durakovic, has opted to stay in Malaysia with Selangor.

Durakovic was not clear whether he would be offered a new contract or not but was last week signed as one of the clubs two imported players, the other one being former West Ham and Everton striker Tony Cotte.

The Warriors feel that Mallinder's departure will be a huge loss not only to Collingwood but to Soccer as a whole.

Spink rates referee

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

The Lakers may be about to have another Socceroo amongst its ranks. Left back Fausto De Amicis is a possibility to be called up to the national team for the January series of games against Norway, South Korea and New Zealand.

Although these games will be the first that new coach Terry Venables takes charge of, assistant coach Raul Blanco will name the squad.

De Amicis has been widely regarded as the best left back playing in the Ericsson Cup but was never picked by former coach Eddie Thomson. He spoke out about not being picked as he saw players like midfielder Jason Polak play in the role.

Spink's response: "Gerry Connolly, he lets you use your hands."

Utility Steve Iosifidis is due to return to first team action shortly after suffering an ankle injury in a bizarre training incident.

Iosifidis was injured by a reckless tackle from a youth team player and missed the games against Marconi and UTS Olympic.

He has impressed since moving at the start of the season from Collingwood Warriors where he joined after a good season in the premier league with Heidelberg United.

Lakers defender Jean Paul Knezevic could be on the way out after failing to gain a position in the first team. He hasn't played yet this season,



This bit is bound to delight supporters of Melbourne Knights. The Warren Spink equaliser against the Knights in their round 7 clash at Lakeside has more than ruffled a few feathers down at Knights Stadium.

In the Lakers club programme for the match against UTS Olympic, Spink admits the handball in a player profile.

"Who is your favourite referee?" asks the programme.

and lately he hasn't been figuring in the youth league.

He came to South Melbourne last year from Canada and was a regular member of Frank Arok's team. He may rejoin Arok at Gippsland Falcons.

Other possible destinations for the defender include Collingwood Warriors, Port Melbourne Sharks and newly promoted premier league team, Springvale White Eagles.

A NEW DEAL (or just new deck-chairs?)

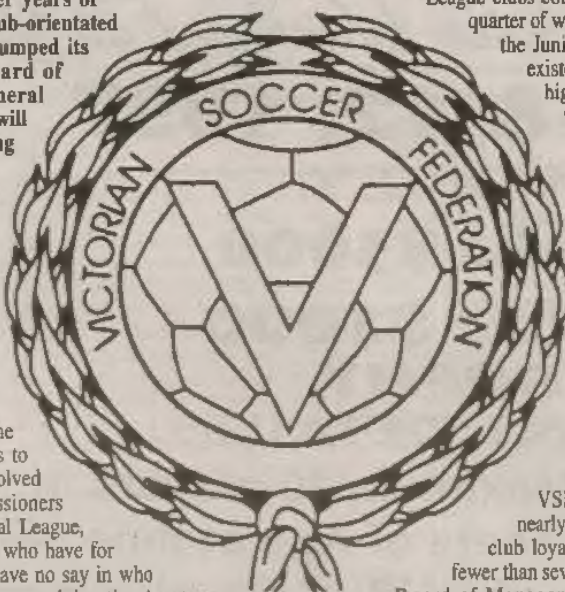
The Victorian Soccer Federation, after years of mismanagement at the hands of a club-orientated Board of Management, has finally dumped its league-driven system in favour of a Board of Commissioners. Next week's Annual General Meeting will elect six commissioners, who will be constitutionally prohibited from holding any office with any club or affiliated body.

The AGM will also elect a Chairman from a small group of nominees including former chairmen Henry Siwka, Jack Reilly and Joe Caruso, as well as ex-Tribunal Chairman Joe Brondolino and Mrs Susan Jones, the wife of ex-CEO Terry Jones. Although the new structure is certainly a step in the right direction, it does not address several key issues that seem certain to remain thorns in the side of the new administration.

The single most objectionable feature of the restructured administration is that it continues to deny a voice to the vast majority of people involved in the game in Victoria. With all six commissioners and the chairman to be elected by the National League, Premier League and State League clubs, those who have for so long been without a vote will continue to have no say in who runs soccer in Victoria. The Provisional League clubs, the Amateur League clubs, the Referees, the Women's leagues, the Junior leagues and the Victorian Country leagues are all without voting rights in the new system - a system set up by the Victorian Soccer Federation which sees itself as a body with at least some control and jurisdiction over these other organisations. Let us make no mistake about the new restructured Victorian Soccer Federation. It is an oligocratic kakistocracy rather than a democracy. It is a small minority which steadfastly refuses to adhere to basic democratic principals but rather insists on imposing its will on the rest of us.

Provisional League clubs have already seen the fate of their attempt to gain even token voting and membership rights in the VSF. Thrown out!

Has the time come when those who are denied a voice must react by refusing to subserve to the authority of those who would oppress in this way? Has the time come for the Provisional League clubs to withdraw from the Victorian Soccer Federation and establish their own, independent body? Certainly, the Provisional



League clubs could easily administer themselves for less than one quarter of what they pay to be VSF affiliates. Likewise, should the Junior Leagues withdraw and adopt an independent existence similar to that enjoyed by the massive, and highly successful, junior body in NSW? The benefits would be similar.

The answers are self-evident!

There are those who would argue that these views are extreme and unnecessarily provocative, but already at least one Provisional League club has said "Enough!" And walked out!

We would all love Soccer to be one big happy family. But that requires changes to the "members-only" mentality that has ruled the VSF for decades. It either wants us or it doesn't. If it does, it must welcome all aboard as equals.

If it doesn't it should not hinder efforts to achieve independent existence.

The second problem with the new restructured VSF Board of Commissioners is that it does not go nearly far enough to ensure that persons with significant club loyalties are excluded as commissioners. Indeed, no fewer than seven of the current league-appointed, club-orientated Board of Management members have nominated themselves as commissioners. Although these people would be forced to sever any official link with any club upon election, it seems quite unlikely that this would change where their real loyalties lie. They are, and will continue to be, persons with affiliations and fondness to certain clubs. It is unlikely that these clubs will change their views on promoting their own people into the administration to service their own needs and desires.

There is therefore a real danger that the new Board of Commissioners will be nothing more than the same old faces with new titles. And their right to appoint two commissioners to their own numbers should ensure the survival of any of their cronies who don't survive the election process.

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Fausto De Amicis: Hopeful of international call up, post Thomson.

AROUND THE CLUBS

BREAKERS SQUAD STRUCK DOWN

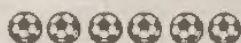
By DANE SKAFTE

Breakers coach, John Kosmina has plenty on his plate leading up this Friday night's match against Sydney United.

Kosmina's squad has been struck down with injuries. Captain David Lowe (calf muscle), Harry James (ankle), Peter Ritchie (corked thigh), Craig Sharpley (ankle).

The Breakers boss has been happy with the way his team has been playing.

"We are creating chances but we can't find the back of the net. Eventually the luck will change for Newcastle," Kosmina said.



Topper Breakers striker Harry James is likely to miss the next three matches in the Ericsson Cup, after being injured in the two all draw against Gippsland Falcons.

The talented 20 year old striker was brought down twice during the match and was forced from the field midway through the second half. He was taken to hospital where X-rays cleared him of a broken ankle. The Falcons player, involved in the incident, was defender Manny Golis who was booked by the referee when he could so easily have been red carded.

James was told last week that he had suffered ligament damage to his right ankle. He will definitely miss the match this Friday night against his former club, UTS Olympic.

"This was a match I was looking forward to playing in but hopefully I can play in the second round against them"

Breakers spokesperson Shane Johnson said last week that John (Kosmina) would have Harry (James) out of the squad until he was one hundred percent fit.

"Harry could come back for the match against Adelaide City in January if everything



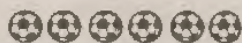
John Kosmina is happy the team has been playing.

goes to plan," Johnson said.

A disappointed James told ABSW that his injury could not have come at a worse time.

"I have worked hard to win a place in the senior squad. I have been playing well over the last couple of weeks to ensure that I stayed in the squad," James concluded.

The lanky striker was very optimistic that he would return before the competition goes into the mid-season recess.



Newcastle Topper Breakers will have a well deserved break from January 10 to February 2.

The Breakers will play their last game against Adelaide City and will fly to Adelaide to play West Adelaide at Hindmarsh Stadium on Sunday February 2.

Canberra slash staff

By GRAHAM DOOKE

Crash strapped Canberra Cosmos slashed its professional staff last week, ending the contracts of two assistant coaches and its marketing manager, but a day later confirming head coach Mike Lyons in his job.

And the ACT Soccer Federation, fearful a Cosmos collapse could wreck its long-term plans for the future of the game, immediately offered its senior team coach, Walter Valeri, free of charge as Lyons' assistant, a proposal the bottom-placed Ericsson Cup club quickly accepted.

It was a week of turmoil at the Cosmos, whose loss to Adelaide City on December 8, meant that it was still looking for its first win 10 games into the competition - one of the worst starts in national league history.

It began with the announcement from chief executive Alan Reis that assistant coaches Ian Heywood and Steve Bryant, and marketing manager Bob Smoothey were going.

That immediately raised speculation over the future of Lyons - speculation that was quashed a day later when chairman Paul Murphy called a press conference to confirm the former Everton star will continue in his two-year

contract, which lasts until the end of the season.

"He has the full support of the board," Murphy said, adding that Lyons had a great value to the club, not only as a coach but as a public-relations man and a fundraiser.

It is understood the ACTSF, which is owed more than \$100,000 by the Cosmos, then stepped in with the offer of Valeri, whose current position with the federation is largely honorary.

Valeri will now get a small payment out of ACTSF coffers, unlikely to do more than cover his expenses, but the man who is one of the best known figures in the Canberra game said he was delighted to be involved in coaching at national league level.

Sources around Canberra soccer said Valeri's appointment will placate criticisms in some quarters that Canberra was coached by the "Pommy Mafia" - Lyons, Heywood and Bryant are all of English extraction - and will certainly strengthen the club's ties with the grass roots of the local game.

In other news, tall defender Ante Juric, who played throughout the Young Socceroos' 1993 World Cup campaign, has returned from an overseas stint and agreed terms with the club.

VIRUS TAKES SHARKS TOLL

West Adelaide's line up over this week may depend on who is unaffected by or recovered from a rampant flu virus, coursing through the team. Many players have been affected by it and are requiring late fitness tests to be able to play. Coach Adrian Santrac is worried about the level of consistency his team has shown over the last couple of weeks.

"There is room for improvement in all areas of the park," he said of his talented squad who are not quite playing to expectations at the moment. He will have Nathan Day back from a one week suspension for this weekend's match, and is also considering a number of players from the youth team who have shown good form in the last few SunSmart Youth League rounds.

SA Premier League side Campbelltown City and

their coach Rocky Aloisi have gone their separate ways. The split came about from a disagreement with the club committee over imposed coaching conditions and the introduction of a selection panel. Aloisi, father of Italian professional John and Socceroo midfielder Ross, still had a year of his contract to run.

The Zebras have few injury worries this week with only a slight cloud hanging over Brad Hassell. His hamstring problem has hampered his game in the last week or two, but should not be a lasting concern.

The young striker, who had a run with the seniors in the pre-season Johnnie Walker Cup series, scored a first half hat-trick for the Joeys against Chilean club side Catolica in Santiago. The under-17's won 4-2, competing in the four-team Copa Parnelat.

Olympic youngsters Tahiti bound

By JODEE ROGERS

Carlos Gonzales, Ivan Zelic and Brett Emerton have been selected as part of the squad of 25, from which 18 will head to Tahiti for the World Youth Cup qualifiers. The squad will leave on 27 December and will return on 14 January. Other nations participating will be New Zealand, Fiji and host country Tahiti. The Youth World Cup finals are in Malaysia next August.

UTS Olympic have been plagued by injury and according to coach David Ratcliffe he has never seen so many genuine injuries and sicknesses in his time of coaching.

Injuries as well as the call up of the three young Socceroos means that Ratcliffe is finding it hard to put together a settled first team squad.

"It's now the time for the fit senior players to rise to the occasion and the young kids to take the chance given to them. So far the fans have

been great and surprised at our young players such as Bove, and Emerton," Ratcliffe stated.

UTS will be holding Coaching Clinics during the school holidays for children between the ages of 6 and 16. They will run in two weekly periods, the first one being from the 20 to 24 January and the second one being from 27 to 31 January. The cost is \$90.00 for each clinic which includes 20 hours tuition, ball, T-shirt, cap, a junior 1996/97 season pass, certificate, team poster and loads of freebies and giveaways. The Clinics will be run by David Ratcliffe and Steve Darby and a number of players including Kris Trajanovski and Milan Blagojevic will also be participating. For more details phone the club on (02) 9558 5355.

The postponed Round 3 game against Collingwood Warriors at Victoria Park on 23 December will be screened live at the Sydney Olympic Social Club, Tennant Parade, Hurlstone Park, kick off at 6.30pm.



David Ratcliffe is disappointed with his two dismissed.



Brad Hassell: Slight hamstring problem hampering him lately.

AROUND THE CLUBS

GOOD IDEA GETS SQUASHED

By PHIL MURPHY

Wollongong City have failed to pull off their most ambitious promotion of the season. Described by Soccer Australia as the Ericsson Cup's trendsetters in promotion, the Wolves wanted to play this week's game against Canberra Cosmos on Sunday rather than Friday night. That would have allowed them to offer free admission to spectators who watched the Saturday night game between Marconi and UTS Olympic.

Wolves marketing man John Denison said the people who went to Marconi Stadium on the Saturday night could have presented their ticket at Brandon Park on Sunday and been admitted free.

"Soccer Australia were very enthusiastic about it and we were allowed to change the game from Friday to Sunday," Denison said.

"Unfortunately, Canberra had some function arranged for the Saturday evening and couldn't agree to the switch. We are hoping to arrange a similar promotion later in the season. The offers of reduced admission that we have arranged through coupons in the Illawarra Mercury have been very successful."

Wollongong have played five home games so far this season and provided spectators with some top-class entertainment. There have been sky divers, a world renowned hypnotist Gary Spellman, players arriving on the field on Harley Davidsons, Atlanta Olympians landing on the ground by helicopter, etc. etc.

For Friday night's game against Canberra the theme will obviously be Christmas. Santa Claus "like you have never seen him before," will be a lure to children and parents alike while the skydivers will be in action

again and the regular tug-of-war between Wollongong soccer clubs will continue. Children will also get the chance to meet "GK", the Christmas Kangaroo and have their faces painted in the Wolves colours.

Footnote: The Wollongong club is hoping to pay tribute to former Socceroo captain Paul Wade on Friday night. If Wade is in the Canberra team to play Wollongong, the home club will make a special presentation to him before the kickoff.

Wollongong chairman Brian Hastings said the presentation would recognise the contribution Wade made to Australian soccer during his years in the Australian team.

"Paul has retired from international football and we want to let him know the people of Wollongong appreciate what he did for the game," Hastings said.

NEW CONFIDENT WOLVES WILL GO ON WITH IT

By PHIL MURPHY

Brett Hughes is confident Wollongong Wolves won't choke during the run towards the Ericsson Cup playoffs. The Wolves goalkeeper has been one of the stars of the team's impressive start to the season.

Hughes believes the knockers who are claiming Wollongong are running on adrenalin and won't stay the full distance will be proved wrong. He told ABSW some people are already bringing up the great Wolves collapse of two years ago. That was when the club was third with six games to go and didn't pick up a point for the remainder of the season.

"The players still at the club who experienced that slump don't want to be reminded of it," Hughes said.

"It was a nightmare but it was brought on because of injuries and suspensions to key players. We had some very good players in the side but unfortunately we didn't have the depth to pick up the

handful of points we needed to stay in the top six.

"It is a different ball game this season. Looking at our current squad, we do have players to slot into every position. More to the point we have players who are versatile and that is important."

Hughes said Wollongong's squad rate among the strongest and most balanced in the league. He said players such as Sasho Dimoski couldn't get a regular place on the Bench while young defender Steve Laybutt is poised to return after three games back from injury in the youth team.

"We all know young Steve is going to develop into a very good player and he will be back in the top side very soon," Hughes said.

"There is probably a squad of 18 players we will be able to call on when he comes back."

From a personal viewpoint, Hughes said he is certainly enjoying the season a lot more than the last campaign. He said being up in the top three is obviously more enjoyable

than fighting to get away from bottom place.

Hughes has been playing very well, as the Wolves goals against record will prove. The former youth international, who was with Sydney City, Apia and Marconi before arriving at Brandon Park five years ago, was at his brilliant best during the recent 1-1 draw against UTS Olympic.

He has been in the playoffs with Wollongong, making the end-of-season games in successive seasons under former coach David Ratcliffe. The Wolves finished fifth the first time and 12 months later took fourth place and created a goals against record. They conceded just 18 goals in league games, a record that will be very hard to beat. Hughes had the likes of Charlie Yankos, Mick O'Shea and David Green in his back four during that season.

These days, it is Gary van Egmond, Jason Connolly and Alvin Ceccoli along with utility man Richard Lloyd to "protect" Hughes. So far they have been doing a very effective job.

Hughes makes no secret of the fact Ron Corry has helped his game a lot this season. Corry, a former international keeper, was recruited by Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos last season as assistant coach. Previously a successful coach in his own right, Corry is recognised as one of the best goalkeeper coaches in the business.

When he arrived in Wollongong, Corry obviously started spending plenty of time with Hughes and the other Wolves goalkeepers.

"Ron has helped me a lot," Hughes said.

"He definitely knows what he is talking about. I had been playing in the national league for quite a while but Ron showed me a few things I didn't know about goalkeeping."

He is 'in my ear' in the dressing room before games and that is important to your concentration. I had a problem coming off my line but Ron worked really hard on that with me and I believe I am a better player for that."



Launch of Gold Memberships at Wollongong waterfront.



Cheerleaders arrive by veteran Chevrolet Bel Air.








Harley Davidson riders take players onto Brandon Park.

ERICSSON CUP

RESULTS & SCORERS

ROUND TEN

Canberra Cosmos 1 (Kelly 30 pen) Brisbane Strikers 4 (Hunter 3 pen, 49 pen; Farina 60, Brown 65) Crowd: 2,525 	Perth Glory 3 (Strudwick 1, Despotovski 25, 35) Wollongong City 1 (Naumovski 29) Crowd: 10,281 	UTS Olympic 1 (Ciantar 59) Melbourne Knights 0 Crowd: 4,834 
Marconi Fairfield 2 (Maloney 20, Zoric 58) Newcastle Breakers 1 (Halpin 67) Crowd: 4,111 	Collingwood Warriors 1 (Taliadros 42) Adelaide City 3 (Mennillo 33, 89; Brooks 43) Crowd: 3,655 	West Adelaide 0 South Melbourne 2 (Orlic 20, Kelic 76) Crowd: 3,972 <div> ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR ROUND 10 1995/96 - 27,132 1996/97 - 31,957 </div>

NEXT WEEK'S FIXTURES

PRICES SUPPLIED BY **SPORTODDS**

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS V SYDNEY UNITED
 FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 1996 - 7.30PM
Newcastle Breakers 7/2, Draw 5/2, Sydney United 4/7

WOLLONGONG CITY V CANBERRA COSMOS
 FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 1996 - 7.30PM
Wollongong City 4/6, Draw 9/4, Canberra 4/1

BRISBANE STRIKERS V COLLINGWOOD WARRIORS
 SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 1996 - 7.00PM
Brisbane Strikers 1/2, Draw 5/2, Collingwood 5/1

SOUTH MELBOURNE V PERTH GLORY
 SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 1996 - 8.00PM
South Melbourne 5/4, Draw 2/1, Perth Glory 7/4

MARCONI FAIRFIELD V UTS OLYMPIC
 SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 1996 - 7.00PM
Marconi Fairfield 5/4, Draw 2/1, UTS Olympic 7/4

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS V WEST ADELAIDE
 SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 1996 - 6.00PM
Melbourne Knights 6/4, Draw 2/1, West Adelaide 2/1

ADELAIDE CITY V GIPPSLAND FALCONS
 SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 1996 - 7.30PM
Adelaide City 5/4, Draw 2/1, Gippsland 7/4

COLLINGWOOD WARRIORS V UTS OLYMPIC
 MONDAY 23 DECEMBER 1996 - 6.30PM
Collingwood Warriors 6/4, Draw 2/1, UTS Olympic 6/4

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Rodney Brown: Brisbane Strikers

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	NAME	TEAM	GOALS
Sydney United	10	9	1	0	33	12	28	David Zdrilic	Sydney United	12
Brisbane Strikers	10	7	2	1	22	11	23	Bobby Despotovski	Perth Glory	9
Perth Glory	10	5	1	4	25	18	16	Rodney Brown	Brisbane Strikers	6
South Melbourne	10	4	3	3	13	10	15	Ante Milicic	Sydney United	6
Adelaide City	10	4	3	3	9	7	15	Paul Strudwick	Perth Glory	6
UTS Olympic	9	4	2	3	14	13	14	Norman Tome	UTS Olympic	5
Wollongong City	10	3	5	2	13	12	14	Jason Bennett	Newcastle Breakers	4
Marconi Fairfield	10	4	2	4	13	15	14	Frank Farina	Brisbane Strikers	4
Gippsland Falcons	10	2	4	4	10	14	10	Matthew Horsley	Wollongong City	4
Collingwood Warriors	9	2	4	3	10	16	10	Norman Kelly	Canberra Cosmos	4
West Adelaide	10	3	1	6	12	19	10	Eddie Kancevic	Gippsland Falcons	4
Melbourne Knights	10	2	3	5	7	12	9	Dino Mennillo	Adelaide City	4
Newcastle Breakers	11	1	5	5	15	21	8	Kijon Taliadros	Collingwood Warriors	4
Canberra Cosmos	11	0	4	7	10	26	4	Kris Trajanovski	UTS Olympic	4
								Jimmy Tsekinis	West Adelaide	4

ABSW ADVERTISER

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Arana Hills and
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Rothnie's Pharmacy,
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Shopping Town
Pharmacy, Toombul
South Australia
David Jones,
Rundle Mall
Tasmania - Olde
Tudor Pharmacy,
Summer Hill.

WORLD RESULTS

AFRICAN CHAMPIONS' CUP

Final, 2nd Leg

Zamalek (Egy) 2 Shooting Stars (Nig) 1
Abdelhadi (27) Okunowo (88)
Mansour (66)
(Aggregate score 3-3 Zamalek won 5-4 on pens)

ASIAN CUP

Group B

Iran 3 Saudi Arabia 0
Bagheri (12)
Daei (37)
Azizi (48)

Iraq 4 Thailand 1
Majeed (17, 50) Chalerman (26)

Table

Iran	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Saudi Arabia	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Iraq	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Thailand	3	0	0	3	2	13	0

Group C

Japan 4 Uzbekistan 0
China 3 Syria 0

Syria 2 Uzbekistan 1
Jokhadar (48) Sergey (53)
Dib (72)

China 0 Japan 1
Soma (90)

Table

Japan	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
China	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Syria	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Uzbekistan	3	1	0	2	3	6	3

Quarter Finals

Utd Arab Emirates 1 Iraq 0
Hussain (golden goal)

Kuwait 2 Japan 0
Al Howaidi (17, 54)

BRAZIL CHAMPIONSHIP

Final - First Leg

Portuguesa 2 Gremio 0
Gallo (39)
Rodrigo (60)

Attendance: 29,355
Second leg to be played on December 15.
Aggregate score will decide the winner. If the
aggregate score is level after Sunday's match,
Gremio will take the title by having the better
overall record in the competition.

GREMIO WIN BRAZILIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Gremio 2 Portuguesa 0
Paulo Nunes (3)
Ailton (85)
Attendance: 55,000
Aggregate score 2-2. Gremio win the title by
having the better overall record in the
competition.

ENGLAND FA CUP

THIRD ROUND

Stevenage Borough	v	Birmingham City
Barnsley	v	Oldham
Chesterfield	v	Bristol City
Barnet or Wycombe	v	Bradford
Wolverhampton	v	Portsmouth
Plymouth	v	Enfield or Peterborough
Hednesford Town	v	York City
Middlesbrough	v	Chester City
Wrexham or S'horp	v	West Ham
Luton	v	Bolton
Sheffield Wed	v	Grimsby
Manchester United	v	Tottenham Hotspur
Stoke City	v	Stockport County
Queens Park Rgrs	v	Huddersfield
Coventry City	v	Woking
Notts County	v	Aston Villa
Reading	v	Southampton
Crystal Palace	v	Leeds United
Everton	v	Swindon Town
Gillingham	v	Derby County
Chelsea	v	West Bromwich Albion
Carlisle United	v	Tranmere
Brentford	v	Manchester City
Charlton Athletic	v	Newcastle United
Blackburn Rovers	v	Port Vale
Crewe	v	Wimbledon
Norwich City	v	Sheffield United
Liverpool	v	Walsall or Burnley
Leicester City	v	Southend
Arsenal	v	Sunderland

Watford v Oxford United
Nottingham Forest v Ipswich

EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS CUP

QUARTER FINALS

Benfica (Port) v Fiorentina (Ita)
Paris St Germ (Fra) v AEK Athens (Gre)
SK Brann (Nor) v Liverpool (Eng)
Barcelona (Spa) v AIK Solna (Swe)
(First legs March 6, second legs March 20)

HASSAN TROPHY

Czech Republic 2 Nigeria 1
Attendance: 80,000

Croatia 1 Czech Republic 1
(Croatia won on penalties)
Morocco 2 Nigeria 0

UEFA CUP

QUARTER FINALS

Newcastle (Eng) v AS Monaco (Fra)
Tenerife (Spa) v Broendby (Den)
Schalke (Ger) v Valencia (Spa)
Anderlecht (Bel) v Inter Milan (Ita)
(First legs March 4, second legs March 18)

WORLD CUP Qualifiers

Europe

Group 5

Cyprus 1 Bulgaria 3
Pittas (29) Balakov (23, 34)
Iliev (70)

Israel 1 Luxembourg 0
Ohana (38)

Table

Russia	3	2	1	0	9	1	7
Israel	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Bulgaria	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Cyprus	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
Luxembourg	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

Group 6

Spain 2 Yugoslavia 0
Guardiola (19pen)
Raul Gonzalez (38)

Table

Yugoslavia	5	4	0	1	18	4	12
Spain	4	3	1	0	12	3	10
Slovakia	4	3	0	1	12	5	9
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	6	1	4
Faroe Islands	5	0	0	5	5	22	0
Malta	3	0	0	3	0	18	0

Group 7

Wales 0 Turkey 0

Belgium 0 Holland 3
Bergkamp (25)
Seedorf (29)
Jonk (90pen)

Table

Netherlands	3	3	0	0	13	2	9
Wales	5	2	1	2	13	10	7
Belgium	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Turkey	3	1	1	1	8	2	4
San Marino	4	0	0	4	0	21	0

Group 8

Macedonia 0 Romania 3
Popescu (37, 45, 90 pen)

Table

Romania	3	3	0	0	10	0	9
Ireland	3	2	1	0	8	0	7
Macedonia	5	2	1	2	15	8	7
Lithuania	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Iceland	4	0	2	2	1	7	2
Liechtenstein	4	0	0	4	2	21	0

Group 9

Portugal 0 Germany 0

Table

Portugal	5	2	2	1	5	2	8
Ukraine	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Germany	3	1	2	0	6	2	5
Northern Ireland	4	1	2	1	4	3	5
Armenia	4	0	3	1	3	7	3
Albania	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

ENGLAND Premier League

Leeds 0 Tottenham 0

Liverpool 5 Middlesbrough 1
Wimbledon 1 Blackburn 0

Table

Arsenal	17	10	5	2	34	16	35
Liverpool	17	10	4	3	31	15	34
Wimbledon	17	10	4	3	30	17	34
Newcastle	16	9	3	4	26	17	30
Aston Villa	17	9	3	5	22	15	30
Manchester Utd	16	7	6	3	31	24	27
Chelsea	16	6	7	3	23	23	25
Everton	16	6	6	4	25	20	24
Tottenham	17	7	3	7	17	17	24
Sheffield Wed	16	6	6	4	17	18	24
Derby	16	5	7	4	19	19	22
Leicester	17	6	3	8	17	22	21
Leeds	17	6	3	8	15	20	21
West Ham	17	4	6	7	15	22	18
Sunderland	16	4	5	7	14	21	17
Middlesbrough	18	3	6	9	21	33	15
Blackburn	17	2	7	8	16	22	13
Southampton	17	3	4	10	24	32	13
Nottingham Forest	16	1	7	8	12	25	10
Coventry	16	1	7	8	10	23	10

Division One

Barnsley	3	Tranmere	0
Bolton	1	Ipswich	2
Charlton	1	Port Vale	3
Norwich	1	Crystal Palace	1
Oxford	4	Sheffield United	1
Portsmouth	3	Huddersfield	1
Queens Park Rang	4	Southend	0
Stoke	2	Swindon	0
Wolverhampton	0	Oldham	1
Birmingham	P	West Bromwich,	
Bradford	P	Reading	

Table

Bolton	23	11	9	3	46	32	42
Barnsley	22	11	8	3	41	26	41
Sheffield United	22	11	6	5	39	24	39
Crystal Palace	22	9	9	4	47	23	36
Oxford	23	9	6	8	31	22	33
Wolverhampton	22	9	6	7	29	22	33
Stoke	21	9	6	6	29	30	33
Norwich	21	9	6	6	28	22	33
Tranmere	23	9	5	9	31	29	32
Birmingham	22	8	8	6	23	21	32
Queens Park Rang	23	8	7	8	29	28	31
Port Vale	23	7	10	6	22	23	31
Swindon	23	9	2	12	32	30	29
Ipswich	23	7	8	8	29	33	29
Portsmouth	23	8	5	10	28	30	29
Charlton	22	9	2	11	24	32	29
Huddersfield	23	7	7	9	26	31	28
Manchester City	22	8	2	12	26	35	26
Reading	22	7	5	10	25	33	26
West Bromwich	21	5	10	6	28	33	25
Southend	23	5	9	9	23	40	24
Oldham	23	5	8	10	24	28	23
Grimsby	22	5	6	11	24	41	21
Bradford	22	5	6	11	21	37	21

Division Two

Bournemouth	1	Millwall	1
Burnley	1	Brentford	2
Gillingham	2	Bury	2
Luton	6	Crewe	0
Notts County	0	Rotherham	0
Plymouth	2	Shrewsbury	2
Stockport	0	Peterborough	0
Walsall	1	Watford	1
Wycombe	1	Chesterfield	0
York	1	Wrexham	0
Preston	3	Blackpool	0

Table

Brentford	23	12	7	4	37	24	43
Millwall	23	11	8	4	33	23	41
Luton	22	12	4	6	40	25	40
Bury	22	11	7	4	35	22	40
Burnley	23	11	4	8	31	24	37
Stockport	23	10	7	6	29	25	37
Watford	22	9	10	3	25	19	37
Chesterfield	22	11	4	7	22	17	37
Wrexham	21	9	8	4	27	23	35
Crewe	22	11	1	10	29	27	34
Bristol City	21	9	6	6	36	23	33
York	22	8	5	9	24	29	29
Shrewsbury	23	7	7	9	28	35	28
Preston	23	8	4	11	24	27	28
Bristol Rovers	22	7	7	8	22	23	28
Gillingham	23	7	5	11	23	29	26
Walsall	22	7	5	10	22	26	26
Bournemouth	23	7	5	11	21	28	26
Blackpool	23	5	10	8	22	27	25
Plymouth	23	5	9	9	26	33	24
Peterborough	23	4	9	10	32	41	21
Notts County	22	5	6	11	15	23	21
Wycombe	23	5	5	13	18	33	20
Rotherham	22	3	7	12	18	33	16

WORLD RESULTS

Division Three

Brighton	3	Hull	0
Cambridge United	1	Wigan	1
Chester	2	Darlington	1
Fulham	1	Leyton Orient	1
Hereford	2	Carlisle	3
Lincoln	1	Northampton	1
Mansfield	1	Colchester	1
Rochdale	1	Hartlepool	3
Scunthorpe	4	Exeter	1
Torquay	1	Scarborough	0
Doncaster	P	Cardiff	

Table

Fulham	23	15	4	4	37	17	49
Carlisle	23	12	7	4	35	22	43
Cambridge United	23	13	4	6	34	28	43
Wigan	22	12	5	5	40	25	41
Scunthorpe	23	10	4	9	32	31	34
Cardiff	21	10	4	7	25	22	34
Chester	22	9	6	7	25	24	33
Colchester	23	7	11	5	33	27	32
Swansea	22	9	5	8	25	25	32
Barnet	22	8	8	6	23	17	32
Northampton	23	8	7	8	32	27	31
Lincoln	23	8	7	8	29	34	31
Torquay	23	9	4	10	23	24	31
Scarborough	22	7	9	6	30	28	30
Hull	23	6	11	6	20	25	29
Rochdale	22	6	8	8	28	29	26
Exeter	23	7	5	11	22	32	26
Hartlepool	22	7	4	11	26	29	25
Mansfield	22	5	10	7	22	23	25
Leyton Orient	22	6	7	9	17	20	25
Doncaster	22	7	3	12	24	33	24
Hereford	23	6	5	12	25	34	23
Darlington	23	6	4	13	31	41	22
Brighton	23	4	4	15	21	42	14

FRANCE

- 11 Dec -

Monaco	3	Troyes	3
(Monaco won 4-2 on pens)			
Montpellier	2	Bastia	2
(Montpellier won 4-2 on pens)			
Le Mans	2	Epinal	0
Rennes	1	Le Havre	0
Niort	0	Lens	2
Nice	2	Caen	2
(Caen won 5-4 on pens)			
Nantes	2	Valence	1
Cannes	1	Nancy	0
Strasbourg	3	Saint-Etienne	0
Bordeaux	3	Chateauroux	0
Metz	2	Lorient	0
Toulouse	2	Louhans-Cuiseaux	3
Toulon	2	Lille	1
Nimes	1	Guingamp	0
Lyon	2	Paris St-Germain	1
Marseille	3	Auxerre	2

- 14 Dec -

Nantes	0	Paris St-Germain	0
Monaco	1	Cannes	0
Nancy	2	Lyon	3
Lille	1	Bastia	2
Bordeaux	2	Rennes	0
Strasbourg	0	Metz	1
Caen	4	Le Havre	0
Guingamp	0	Nice	1
Montpellier	1	Lens	0

Table

Monaco	22	13	6	3	37	16	45
Paris Saint-Germ	22	12	7	3	34	15	43
Bastia	22	11	6	5	30	23	39
Bordeaux	22	10	7	5	32	23	37
Auxerre	21	9	8	4	28	13	35
Metz	22	9	8	5	23	17	35
Strasbourg	22	11	1	10	27	30	34
Lyon	22	8	8	6	30	33	32
Nantes	22	7	10	5	41	25	31
Guingamp	22	7	8	7	18	19	29
Rennes	22	8	4	10	25	30	28
Lille	22	7	7	8	23	32	28
Marseille	21	6	9	6	19	18	27
Le Havre	22	6	7	9	22	25	25
Cannes	22	6	7	9	14	23	25
Lens	22	7	4	11	25	35	25
Montpellier	22	4	9	9	18	25	21
Caen	22	4	7	11	16	26	19
Nancy	22	3	7	12	16	29	16
Nice	22	4	4	14	18	39	16

ITALY

Serie A

Atalanta	4	Piacenza	0
Cagliari	2	Bologna	2
Inter	3	Sampdoria	4
Juventus	3	Verona	2
Perugia	1	Lazio	2
Reggiana	0	Milan	3
Roma	1	Napoli	0
Udinese	2	Fiorentina	0

Table

Juventus	13	8	4	1	20	10	28
Vicenza	13	6	5	2	22	13	23
Milan	13	6	3	4	22	15	21
Bologna	13	6	3	4	22	18	21
Inter	13	5	6	2	19	15	21
Roma	13	5	5	3	21	16	20
Napoli	13	5	5	3	17	17	20
Sampdoria	13	5	4	4	20	14	19
Lazio	13	5	4	4	14	12	19
Fiorentina	13	4	6	3	19	16	18
Udinese	13	5	3	5	17	17	18
Perugia	13	5	1	7	18	23	16
Piacenza	13	4	4	5	14	20	16

Parma	13	3	6	4	13	14	15
Atalanta	13	3	5	5	16	21	14
Cagliari	13	2	5	6	16	21	11
Verona	13	1	4	8	13	26	7
Reggiana	13	0	5	8	10	25	5

Serie B

Bari	3	Venezia	1
C Sangro	0	Lucchese	0
Chievo	1	Torino	0
Cosenza	1	Pescara	1
Cremonese	1	Cesena	0
Empoli	3	Foggia	0
Genoa	4	Brescia	0
Palermo	1	Reggina	1
Ravenna	1	Padova	1
Salernitana	1	Lecce	1

Table

Lecce	14	9	4	1	26	15	31
Pescara	14	7	5	2	22	12	26
Bari	14	5	8	1	20	10	23
Brescia	14	6	5	3	18	14	23
Ravenna	14	5	6	3	17	15	21
Empoli	14	6	3	5	17	17	21
Genoa	13	4	8	1	19	10	20
Padova	14	5	5	4	16	16	20
Lucchese	14	4	7	3	12	10	19
Torino	14	5	4	5	17	17	19
Chievo	14	5	4	5	16	16	19
Palermo	14	3	7	4	13	15	16
Foggia	14	4	4	6	15	21	16
Cosenza	14	3	6	5	13	18	15
Salernitana	14	3	6	5	8	13	15
Venezia	14	3	4	7	15	19	13
Reggina	14	2	7	5	11	16	13
Cesena	14	2	6	6	12	15	12
Cremonese	14	3	3	8	8	15	12
C Sangro	13	3	2	8	5	16	11

SCOTLAND Premier Division

Aberdeen	0	Motherwell	0
Hibernian	1	Dundee United	1
Kilmarnock	2	Hearts	0
Raith	P	Celtic	
Rangers	3	Dunfermline	1

Table

Rangers	16	12	2	2	38	14	38
Aberdeen	17	8	5	4	30	20	29
Celtic	14	8	3	3	32	15	27
Dundee United	17	5	6	6	19	18	21
Hearts	17	5	6	6	19	23	21
Dunfermline	16	5	5	6	22	31	20
Hibernian	17	5	4	8	18	28	19
Motherwell	17	4	6	7	17	24	18
Raith	16	4	3	9	15	27	15
Kilmarnock	15	4	2	9	19	29	14

Division One

Dundee	1	Stirling	1
Falkirk	0	Greenock Morton	0
St Mirren	3	Partick	2

Table

St Johnstone	17	12	2	3	36	8	38
Falkirk	18	9	3	6	18	15	30
Airdrieonians	17	7	8	2	29	17	29
Dundee	17	7	6	4	13	9	27
St Mirren	18	8	3	7	26	24	27
Greenock Morton	18	7	5	6	20	16	26
Partick	17	6	6	5	25	19	24
Stirling	18	3	5	10	20	35	14
Clydebank	17	4	2	11	12	28	14
East Fife	15	1	4	10	10	38	7

Division Two

Brechin	3	Queen of the South	3
Dumbarton	1	Hamilton	3
Livingston	1	Ayr	0
Stranraer	1	Berwick	1

Table

Livingston	17	11	4	2	28	13	37
Ayr	17	11	2	4	30	19	35
Hamilton	17	10	4	3	34	14	34
Clyde	16	7	4	5	22	20	25
Queen of the South	17	6	5	6	27	30	23
Stenhousemuir	16	5	5	6	20	12	20
Stranraer	17	5	3	9	14	23	18
Brechin	17	3	7	7	17	23	16
Dumbarton	17	4	4	9	19	32	16
Berwick	17	1	4	12	17	42	7

Division Three

Albion	P	Ross County	
East Stirling	1	Cowdenbeath	0
Forfar	P	Alloa	
Inverness C Thistle	2	Montrose	0
Queen's Park	3	Arbroath	1

Table

Inverness C. Thistle	17	9	5	3	30	20	32
Montrose	18	9	3	6	30	27	30
Ross County	17	8	3	6	27	23	27
Forfar	16	7	4	5	29	25	25
Alloa	16	7	4	5	24	21	25
Albion	16	6	6	4	21	17	24
Cowdenbeath	17	7	3	7	23	20	24
Queen's Park	17	4	5	8	23	31	17
East Stirling	17	3	5	9	15	25	14
Arbroath	17	2	6	9	13	26	12

Scottish FA Cup first round

Albion	0	Forfar	0
Huntly	1	Clyde	1

ROBERTO BAGGIO LEAVING

AC Milan and Italian national team forward Roberto Baggio is preparing to leave the Red and Black and possibly transfer to Manchester United or Bayern Munich, Italian daily Corriere della Sera according to reports.

The 29-year-old Baggio told the Italian news agency ANSA that he needed a few days to think of a possible transfer and to make a final decision.

"Right now I can't exclude any possibility. Until 10 days ago I could hardly imagine this situation," Baggio said.

Corriere della Sera identified Man United and Bayern as the principle bidders for Baggio, the Azzurri's hero at the 1994 World Cup where it reached the final.

Often relegated to the substitutes bench although being one of AC Milan's leading scorers, Baggio's chances to get a steady place in the starting lineup dimmed further following the arrival



Roberto Baggio: Not favoured by Sacchi

of new coach Arrigo Sacchi, who gave up his job with the Italian national team to rejoin AC Milan earlier this month, has a history of favouring more physical players over technical ones.

AC Milan officials said only that Baggio's contract with the club expires in 1998

and did not comment on transfer rumours.

Several Italian leading players such as Gianfranco Zola, Gianluca Vialli and Fabrizio Ravanelli have transferred to the English League this year, allured by richer contracts and less stressful playing conditions.

DUTCH OUTCLASS NEIGHBOURS

Holland outclassed neighbours Belgium in Brussels in their Group Seven World Cup qualifier on Saturday, cruising to a 3-0 victory at the King Baudouin stadium with goals from Dennis Bergkamp, Clarence Seedorf and Wim Jonk.

Bergkamp hit the opener midway through the first half when the Arsenal striker raced onto a through ball from Jaap Stam as the Belgian defence appealed for offside.

Seconds earlier, the Dutch had had a let off when naturalised Brazilian Luis Oliveira just failed to connect with a header following a cross from the right by Luc Nilis, who plays his club football in Holland with PSV Eindhoven.

But having survived that scare, the visitors ensured their grip on the game with a second goal in the 28th minute from Real Madrid midfielder Seedorf.

Seedorf, earning rave reviews in Spain, cut in from the left and beat Eric Van Meir before lofting a superbly-executed shot with the outside of his right boot into the net beyond the dive of keeper Filip De Wilde.

In the second half, Belgium's misery was compounded with the 50th-minute dismissal of Pascal Renier. Their despair was complete when Jonk dispatched a last-g

WORLD STORIES

Ronaldo's salary doubled

Barcelona have doubled Ronaldo's annual salary to \$4.82 million in a new deal which will keep the young striker at the club until 2006, according to unofficial reports. Any team wanting to sign the Brazilian are also likely to have to pay the club \$96.25 million for his signature.

Ronaldo was bought from PSV Eindhoven in the close season for \$24.07 million but has already been the subject of several bids after a spectacular start to the Spanish season.

"The business is closed," said Barcelona vice-president Joan Gaspart, who refused to discuss the terms of the deal. The news comes in the wake of Barcelona's 2-0 defeat to arch-rivals Real Madrid, in which Ronaldo missed a simple chance and took a shot at the Catalan club's tradition of supporting players and managers after set-backs.

Despite a quiet spell in the past few games, Ronaldo still leads the Spanish scoring tables with 13 goals, level with Real's Davor Suker.



Ronaldo: Has his salary wage increased dramatically

SHOOTING STARS BROUGHT DOWN

Zamalek of Egypt lifted a record fourth African Champions' Cup on Friday when it beat 10-man Shooting Stars of Nigeria 5-4 on penalties in the final.

The Egyptian side, trailing 2-1 after the first leg in Ibadan, Nigeria, two weeks ago, won the second leg 2-1 in front of a hysterical 80,000 crowd to make it 3-3 on aggregate and force the penalty shoot-out.

Zamalek had seemed to be on course for a clear-cut win after going 2-0 up. But a lapse in concentration in the dying stages allowed Stars to draw level on aggregate as substitute Gbenga Okunowo sneaked a last-minute goal for the outclassed Nigerians at the end of a bruising encounter.

When the final went

immediately into spot-kicks, African competitions do not allow for extra time in an aggregate draw, both teams scored four out of their five penalties before Ossama Nabil put Zamalek 5-4 ahead.

Stars' substitute Ademola Johnson then blasted the ball against the underside of the bar, and saw it bounce out to give Zamalek victory.

Knowing a 1-0 win would be enough to secure the Cup on the away goal rules, Zamalek attacked from the outset and twice hit the woodwork before defender Mehdi Abdelhadi curled a close-range shot into the net in the 27th minute.

Stars had David Ogaga, who had only been on the pitch for 22 minutes, sent off in the 60th minute for a crude

foul in midfield.

Zamalek looked to have sealed the win six minutes later when Tarek Mustapha beat oncoming goalkeeper Abiodun Baruwa and centred perfectly for Ayman Mansour to head into an empty net.

The Cairo aristocrats could well have increased their 2-0 lead had Algerian international Kamel Kaci Soud squandered two gilt-edge chances, and they almost paid the price when Okunowo slammed home for Stars to silence the boisterous crowd.

Visiting Nigerians fans were pelted throughout the game by locals in the terraces above them and were later set upon by riot police, who chased them out of the stadium.

Monaco pull away

A late goal from Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson gave Monaco a 1-0 win over Cannes and extended their lead in the French League to two points on Saturday.

Rivals Paris Saint Germain, who trailed on goal difference before the matches, could only draw 0-0 away at the League's leading scorers Nantes, while Bastia and Bordeaux closed the gap on Paris as both posted wins. Anderson scored his 10th goal of the campaign, heading home from

Lillian Martin's cross in the 86th minute after the leaders had failed to convert a number of chances on a barely playable pitch.

Paris, who had lost their last two matches, missed several chances with Patrice Loko spurning a great first-half chance when 15 metres out and with just the keeper to

beat but he put it wide.

Bastia striker Frank Vandecasteele scored the opener in their 2-1 away win at Lille that kept the Corsican side's title hopes alive.

He scored with a 15 metre shot in the first-half after constant Bastia pressure, and then substitute Pierre Laurent seized on a mistake in the Lille defence to slot home the second after the break.

Lille's David Garcion, signed from Nantes in the summer, reduced the deficit in the 72nd minute.

Bordeaux also stayed in the title race with a 2-0 home victory over Rennes, although their first goal came against the run of play.

Kaba Diawara scored his fifth goal in his five appearances this season to give last season's UEFA Cup finalists the three points.

Bordeaux, who play Bastia on Thursday in the final round of matches before the winter break, settled the match late in the second-half with a goal from substitute Marc Zampieri, signed from Toulon this summer.



IRAN MARCH FORWARD

Iran 3 Saudi Arabia 0

Iran marched into the quarter-finals of the Asian Cup being held in Dubai when they crushed tournament favourites Saudi Arabia 3-0 in their final Group B match.

It was a must win match for the Iranians and they secured the perfect start with an 11th minute goal. A Khodadad Azizi shot was half cleared by the Saudi defence and Karim Bagheri, lurking on the edge of the area, drove the ball past a helpless Mohamed Al-Daeyea. It was the first goal of the tournament conceded by Al-Daeyea, but it was not going to be the last as Iran drove forward.

The shaky Saudi defence managed to weather the storm until the 36th minute when winger Ali Reza Mansourian managed to take the ball to the byline before turning it back to Azizi. He slipped it to the unmarked Ali Daei who made

no mistake.

The stunned Saudis tried to come back but the momentum was in Iran's favour. The Saudis, who have already clinched the group, did not share the hunger of the Iranians who played like men prepared to die if necessary.

Saudi hopes of getting their act together in the second half lasted all of two minutes - that was how long it took Iran to make it 3-0 and put the result beyond doubt. It was a brilliant individual effort by Azizi who jinxed past three Saudi defenders before coolly slotting the ball past Al-Daeyea.

It was a stunning performance by a team who only last week were in revolt with trainer Hassan Jahupour. The team threatened to go on strike after Jahupour insisted on a full training schedule at midday in the blazing sunshine.

IRAQ SLAM THAILAND

Iraq 4 Thailand 1

Iraq joined arch enemies Iran in the Asian Cup quarter-finals when they ran over Thailand 4-1 in the final Group B match on Wednesday.

Thailand had no answer to the slick Iraqi attack which was simply too strong for the slight Thais. It took only 17 minutes for Iraq to open the scoring when Qahtan Dham crossed from the right. Defender Hayder Majeed, waiting all alone at the far post, hit home from only a few metres out.

Six minutes later a blistering drive from 23 metres by Laith Hussein gave Thai keeper Wacharapong Somcit no chance.

But Thailand, who lost their two previous group matches, were still playing for pride and shocked the Iraqis when they reduced the deficit

only three minutes later. Seconds after firing a free-kick onto the crossbar, Dusit Chalermsan collected a ball from Sujja Sirikeat before steering it past Emad Hassan.

But the goal could not stop Iraq's relentless march forward and in the 50th minute Majeed rushed into the area unmarked to rise above the Thai defence and head home a Hussein corner.

Fifteen minutes later it was Hussein's turn, from the edge of the area. Wacharapong was left grasping at air as the ball crashed into the back of the net.

The Iraqi's continued to sweep forward, two more goals putting them top of the group, above Iran and Saudi Arabia on goal difference.



All Whites name squad

New Zealand coach KEITH PRITCHETT has largely stuck with his players from the recent tour of the Middle East in naming an 18-strong squad for a quadrangular tournament in Australia next month. The All Whites had two wins, two losses and a draw from their five-match tour.

Napier City Rovers goalkeeper MARK PASTON has been elevated from the national under 23 side as backup for first choice JASON BATTY.

One notable absentee is New Zealand's best player, WYNTON RUFER, who had already committed to a gala in Germany. The other two players missing from the Middle East tour are retired goalkeeper GRANT SCHOFIELD and

defender GAVIN WILKINSON, who is with Perth Glory.

Squad: Rodger Gray (captain), Nik Viljoen, Darren McClelland (Wairakere City), Jason New, Andy Rennie, Mark Paston (Napier City Rovers), Danny Hay, Mark Elrick (Central), Jason Batty (North Shore), Stuart Jacobs, Michael McGarry, Simon Elliott, Chris Jackson (Miramar Rangers), Graham Marshall (Wellington United), Neil Harlock (Wollongong, Aust), Chris Zornick (England-based), Vaughn Coveny (South Melbourne), Mark Burton (Osnabruck, Germany).

Vaughn Coveny: in All Whites squad for internationals in January.



Ronaldo, Weah, Shearer...

Ronaldo, Alan Shearer and George Weah are the three players in contention for the FIFA Player of the Year award for 1996.

FIFA announced last week that a record 120 national team coaches voted for their top three players and that these three are ahead.

Brazilian star Ronaldo plays for Barcelona in Spain,

Newcastle's Alan Shearer, was top-scorer at the European Championship for England, and Weah guided AC Milan to the Italian league title.

Soccer's world governing body will announce the order of the top three at an award ceremony in Lisbon on January 20.

Weah, who will also collect FIFA's Fair Play prize for

helping to keep war-torn Liberia in the World Cup, received the Player of the Year award last year.

Other previous winners include Lothar Matthaus of Germany (1991), Marco van Basten of the Netherlands (1992), Italy's Roberto Baggio (1993) and Brazil's Romario (1994).



RISING STARS

AUSTRALIAN JOEYS SEE OFF CHILE

The Coca Cola Joeys achieved the best result of their South American Tour so far with a hard fought and impressive 2-1 win over Chile at the Santa Laura Stadium in Santiago on Sunday December 8.

Australia took full control of the game in the first half, attacking strongly throughout and despite a desperate attempt by Chile to fight back in the second session, they were unable to get through Australia's solid back line and in particular past John in goal who made superb saves to keep the Joey's ahead.

Zaekis should have scored in the 7th minute after a great build up through Langdon, Culina and Dodd but his final shot just skimmed the bar. Barnes solo effort was well saved a minute later. Baldwin got a great through ball from Langdon but his shot also just went wide. Zaekis went close again in the 16th minute with a great strike but it was tipped away for a corner. Culina, after a well timed ball from Barnes caught the keeper off his line in the 18th but his chip

shot also went over the bar and his free kick from the edge of the area in the 23rd was somehow scrambled out of the top corner by Vargas.

The Joeys finally got reward for all their efforts in the 23rd minute. Zaekis received a pinpoint pass through the defence from Barnes only to get upended in the penalty area. Baldwin made no mistake with the spot kick to give Australia a well deserved lead.

Chile were unable to keep the Australians out and in the 32nd minute a great cross from Dodd on the right found Baldwin on the far post who headed in strongly to put Australia 2-0 ahead.

Baldwin nearly made it 3-0 in the 36th with a great strike from the edge of the area but again Vargas did well to save and Barnes was also denied by the keeper in the 38th minute.

Chile finally pulled a goal back against the run of play in the 38th minute when Navea mis-hit a cross but saw it bend in sharply at the far post to catch John unaware and bring the score back to 2-1.

The second half saw Chile

Score: Chile 1 Australia 2
Scorers: Chile: Navea (38); Australia: Baldwin (23, 32).
Team: John Bosevski, Dodd, Cuzzupe, Bosnar, Langdon, Jurjevic, 65', Culina, Deur, Barnes, Ergin

come out with a lot more fire and they began to put the pressure back on Australia and created 3 great chances in the space of 15 minutes.

Bosevski, Cuzzupe and Bosnar kept the defence tight for the last half hour and didn't allow anything to get through.

Les Scheinflug was pleased with the result although still looking for the squad to improve their concentration and give less of the ball away which often put them under unnecessary pressure. He was confident the team would continue to improve greatly as they have done during the tour so far. Best for Australia were Dodd, Culina and John.

Four for Joeys in tournament

Although Catolica proved to be tough and skilful opposition the Australians battled well against an early set back to take control of the game and held out a determined fight back by Catolica in the second half. Catolica moved the ball about quickly and made the Australians look flat footed early in the game. The visitors regained their momentum and went on with the job, inspired by a fine hat trick from Dodd playing his first game up front.

Australia had a disastrous start to the game when in the 45th second Culina gave the ball away on the half way line to Flores who scooted up the line crossed

into Alvares on the far post who headed in to give Catolica the early lead.

Dodd levelled the scores in the 10th minute after dispossessing Alvares outside the area and striking the ball first time low and hard past Burgos in goal.

In the 19th minute Culina made a great run down the right and crossed in to find Dodd who flicked the ball past the keeper at the near post to put the Australians 2-1 ahead.

Another Culina cross in the 29th minute found Barnes who headed on to Dodd. He volleyed in from outside the goal area.

Catolica made the score 3-2 after Tomasevic pushed Barrientos on the edge of the area to concede a dubious penalty

Score: Catolica 2 Australia 4.
Scorers: Catolica: Alvares (1, 47). Australia: Dodd (10, 19, 29), Culina (55).

with which Alvares made no mistake.

Catolica continued to mount pressure against the Australians and they looked certain to eventually break through however some desperate defending ensured they didn't and in the 55th minute Culina put the game virtually out of reach with a strong low shot past Burgos from outside the area following a good build-up through Langdon, Cuzzupe and Baldwin.

SUNSMART NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Round 8

Adelaide Blue Eagles (Giordano 2, Puccini, Calvanese, Mango)	5	Cumberland United (Kandis, Trudini, Parkin, M. Capasso)	4
Para Hills	0	Woodville City (Salvatore, Chitt, Calabria)	3
Adelaide City (Gosli, Sablyak)	2	SASI	0
West Adelaide (Pezos, Daskalos)	2	Modbury	0

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Adelaide City	8	7	1	0	26	5	22
West Adelaide	7	5	1	2	21	5	16
Modbury	7	5	1	2	15	10	16
Woodville City	8	5	0	3	15	6	15
SASI	8	3	1	4	16	15	10
Adelaide Blue Eagles	8	3	0	5	15	25	9
Cumberland United	8	2	0	6	13	20	6
Para Hills	8	0	0	8	4	39	0

NORTHERN DIVISION NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Round 10

ACT Academy	1
QAS (Stephenson 85)	0
NSW IS	3
Sydney United (Attard 27, Harries 36, Chippis 78, Burns 8, Ashner 77)	2
Marconi Fairfield	1
Newcastle Breakers (Galluzzo 88 pen)	0
UTS Olympic	0
Syd. United Colts (Krstovic 60, James 79)	2
Fairfield Colts	1
AIS (Bosevski 83)	0

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Southern Division — Round 10

Bentleigh Greens (Oter)	1	Melbourne Knights (Bacak, Rajher, Medugorac)	3
Gippsland Falcons (Savage, Hutchinson, Mitroulas, Tewerik)	4	Springvale City	0
Sunshine Georgies (Bickle)	1	Green Gully (Pete, Stafrace, Gec)	3
Box Hill (Petrovski 2, Petrovski, Carey)	0	VIS	4
Collingwood Warriors (Di Iorio)	1	Altona Magic (Petkovski)	1
Heidelberg United (Kyriakou, Dimas)	2	South Melbourne (Goutzioulis 2, Allsopp)	3
Melb. Knights Colts (Kablar, Kolceg, Razov)	3	Thomastown Zebras (De Propertis 2)	2

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
VIS	10	8	2	0	29	3	26
South Melbourne	10	8	0	2	44	15	24
Gippsland Falcons	10	7	1	2	41	14	22
Melbourne Knights	10	6	2	2	28	18	20
Sunshine Georgies	10	6	1	3	16	14	19
Green Gully	10	6	0	4	20	19	18
Collingwood Warriors	9	4	4	1	28	14	16
Melbourne Knights Colts	10	5	0	5	19	23	15
Altona Magic	10	3	1	6	11	27	10
Springvale City Reds	10	2	2	6	15	34	8
Bentleigh Greens	9	2	1	6	10	22	7
Heidelberg United	10	1	2	7	17	30	5
Thomastown Zebras	9	1	0	8	13	30	3
Box Hill	9	0	2	7	9	37	2

Lakers climb table

By ROY HAY

Melbourne Knights scored two late goals to defeat Bentleigh Greens by three goals to one at Kingston Heath on Friday night. Stefan Oter of the Greens and Mario Medugorac of the Knights exchanged goals in the 48 and 49th minutes, but keeper John Pandoleon kept the Greens in the game till the 80th minute when substitute Joey Rajher finally broke through. Top scorer Branko Bacak made the points secure with a third goal five minutes later.

A nine-man Springvale City held out against the Gippsland Falcons until an hour had passed at Falcons Stadium, but when Adrian Savage finally broke through there could only be one winner. John Hutchinson made it two in 81 minutes, and Billy Mitroulas in 83 and Glen Tewerik in 89 added further goals. For the Falcons Adrian Savage, John Hutchinson and Archie Thompson were the stars, but the nine heroes from Springvale deserved the handshakes they received at the end.

In a torrid derby at Chaplin Reserve, Green Gully beat Sunshine Georgies by three goals to one. Georgies lost

three players after double bookable offences, including Lee Bickle, Mohamed El Kersh and Joe de Bono. George Pete scored for Green Gully in the first half and Lee Bickle replied for the Georgies, but then late goals by Dean Stafrace and Safet Gec saw Gully home.

Collingwood Warriors dominated the match against Altona Magic for long periods at Victoria Park but failed to take its chances in front of goal, with Peter Di Iorio, Vlad Babic and Bill Papadimitriou all passing up great opportunities. Di Iorio did score after 23 minutes following a good break by Babic and a cut-back which opened up the goal. Di Iorio hit the bar, Theo Alexiou had a low driven cross which eluded everyone on the goal line and Vlad Babic also hit the woodwork, but the score stayed at one-nil till injury time. Pece Siveski, substitute Jovanovic Novacevski and Pece Cergovski all came close for the Magic, before Vlado Petkovski fired in a shot which was deflected sufficiently to beat Dean Anastasiadis and gain a point for the young and enthusiastic Magic team.

The Victorian Institute of Sport had a four-nil win over Box Hill at Wembley Park.

Bill Petrovski scored twice, Zoran Petrovski and Joe Carey once apiece. The win keeps the VIS on top of the ladder, two points clear of South Melbourne.

South Melbourne marched away to a three-nil lead against Heidelberg United, but the Bergers then pegged back one goal before half time and another in 82 minutes to set up a rousing finish, but the Blues held on to win 3-2. George Goutzioulis with two and Daniel Allsopp gave South Melbourne its start, but Elhas Kyriakou hit back after 36 minutes. When Steve Dimas made it two for the Bergers there were signs of an upset, but it was not to be. Sixteen year old Daniel Malina was a top player for the Bergers with a series of forays down the right wing.

Melbourne Knights Colts bounced back from last week's defeat to down Thomastown Zebras by three goals to two. Adis Kablar started the scoring in four minutes and Ivan Kolceg made it two for the Knights in 41 minutes, but in between David De Propertis repeated his two goal effort of last week against the Knights' senior youth team. It was into the last minute when Ivo Razov popped up to grab the winner for the Colts.



News in Brief



... by BOB BROOKS



If you're wondering where New Zealand All White, Chris Zoricich is right now, then check Doncaster Rovers in the English Division 3. He is trialling with the permission of his non league club Welling United.

Welling are currently in the lower reaches of the Vauxhall Conference, so the step up to Donnie Rovers should not be beyond the former Brisbane Strikers defender.



One of our readers, John Xuereb rang me with a real poser.



When David Zdrilic scored recently into an empty net with an audacious back heeler, was he technically offside?

The Ericsson Cup leading scorer streaked forward with the ball left all opposition, including the goalie in his wake, near the goal he overran the ball finished up in the net himself, note - over the goal line, came back and did his trick

Was he offside or did he leave the field of play without the referees permission?

Makes you think. We'll address this one to Gary Power, Soccer Australia's Director of Referees.



Continuing on with what incentives Ericsson Cup clubs are offering to entice spectators we come to Marconi.

The elite outfit tops the lot when it comes to cash. By



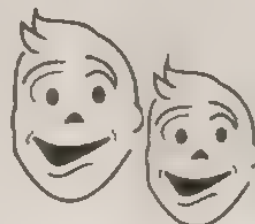
accurately shooting a full size soccer ball through a hole twice as big, it is possible to win \$10,000. A near miss brings a mobile phone.

Marconi's licenced Club is the most convenient to the Stadium. Probably twenty paces takes the spectator from the ground into the palatial premises.

However the Lakers have the best position in this area, as far as is known, because it is possible to be in their Club and still be able to watch the game but you miss all the atmosphere of the big crowd.



Heard that 15 year old Peter Petrovski is enjoying his Big Brother Movement stay with Ipswich Town in the East Anglia region of England.



The tall keeper is training with the Club custodians, including current number one Craig Forrest, the USA international. Their coach in this specialised position is Malcolm Finlayson, a long time English professional who had lengthy spells with Wolverhampton Wanderers and Aston Villa.

It's very cold in England as they are in the depths of

winter but nevertheless young Petrovski is surprised by how many games he's been able to play

Quite an education for the young bloke.



The cuts to the allocation from the Australian Sports Commission to Soccer were not unexpected but still came as a shock.

They could have been more draconian and then a radical rethink would have been necessary concerning the AIS. It has a high rating on the international scene as a producer of first class Soccer talent.

As Janene Mar said the other day in reference to the AIS, "They really need to rethink what they are trying to achieve."

No argument, Janene. An institution, such as the AIS, needs to revisit their mission statement (hey, look at that modern jargon!) every couple of years.



The 1996 FIFA Fair Play Award has gone to George Weah. It was for his personal contribution which enabled his home country, Liberia to participate in the African World Cup qualifiers.



Goodness knows how he managed to get things organised because Liberia was then embroiled in a civil war. Wonder how wars can be considered 'civil'?

The award consists of a trophy and 10,000 Swiss

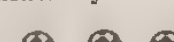
francs which he then donated (the money) to an SOS Children's Village of his choice. FIFA supports this noble charity through their organisation.



Seems like there are moves afoot to modify the back pass Law. At the moment a player can head the ball back to the goalie and then it can be caught. It can also be chested, stomached, bummed or shouldered back and still it can be picked up.

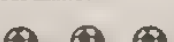
It is only a back pass with the foot which can't be handled.

It'll not be until March 1 next year, when the International Football Association Board meets, that any changes can be considered fully.



Beach Soccer has been brought under FIFA jurisdiction. Players play barefoot on sand in this version.

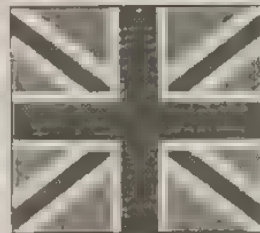
What about indoor or FUTSAL or whatever its various names?



England in January, not an attractive proposition to some. Short hours of daylight, overcast, very cold, snow, frost, ice, overheated shops. However Micky Brock and Stuart Jones two of our regular feature writers are headed there at that time.

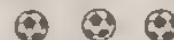
Asked how he'll probably cope Micky replies, "with me sheepskin lined Drizabone". Bet he gets plenty of offers for it in London.

How about this for a schedule: Saturday morning, Stamford Bridge



in the arvo. Sunday off to Highbury, surprise, surprise! Then another game on the Wednesday.

A real busman's holiday. Makes the cricket look very attractive.

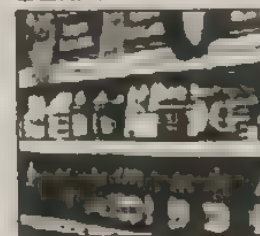


Trust that the Four Nations Optus Challenge will carry the name Australia on the scoreboard for the host country

In recent years, at the Sydney Football Stadium, teams like Ghana, Canada and Japan have played an organisation called Coca Cola Socceros. Sponsorship is most welcome but the name implies that all the Australian players drink is coke?



Words are wonderful. Pictures are okay but somehow they fail to amuse as much as words.



Take this from a Press Release concerning the Independent Chairman of the Australia Soccer Players Commission, John Barker.

Referring to J Barker JP and his time as a Minister in the Tasmanian parliament, "This portfolio took in public sector management ... Well wouldn't we all like a

portfolio, trust it was good quality fortified wines from the Rutherglen area of Victoria!

Also 'took in public sector'. Now in some countries that means that he pulled the wool over the eyes of the public. Words are wonderful and much fun.



Perth Oval, where the Glory play, has an interesting story to tell. On the ground there is a South African chestnut tree. When the tree flowers at 'the right time' the winter occupants of the oval, East Perth win the local Aussie Rules competition.

In 1996 East Perth made the Grand Final. They were beaten by two points. However the chestnut tree has now flowered during Glory's tenancy.

Could this be an omen for the Ericsson Cup and Perth Glory? Stranger things have happened.



With the reintroduction of the Under 18 competition to the NSW Super League, have come real challenges for lower division clubs. They are struggling to find enough players to fill their requirements.

This situation is made worse by so many players going about their sport overseas. The available ranks are depleted in both quantity and as a consequence in quality.

Like lemmings, teenagers have rushed to Super League clubs hoping to be selected. Many will have to be disappointed which could then have the affect of making the rejected feel inadequate.

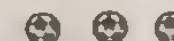
Quite a dilemma for players and clubs.



Perth's glory is shining out in the West, the crowd against Wollongong was over 10,000.

Their success on the field has certainly spurred on the West Australian capital's population to get out and support their team.

Boby Despotovski could even be a shock selection in Australia's squad for the four nation Optus Series in January. There is no denying his goalscoring form.



Will Canberra Cosmos continue long into the future? The statements of last week seem to have done little to reassure the potential fans.

Less than half their usual crowd bothered to turn up for one of the most attractive teams in the Ericsson Cup, Brisbane Strikers.

Without income at the gate or through the canteen a team finds it hard to survive.

SERIE A REPORT...

By LANCE LIBRANDI

Bologna 1 Piacenza
(Paramatti 53) (Tentoni 90)

A last-gasp goal by Piacenza striker Tentoni, a great diving header from a late corner, denied Bologna a home win which would have promoted them to joint leaders on the ladder. To worsen the feeling of missed opportunity, they missed a penalty and Piacenza played the second half with ten men after their midfielder Pan was red-carded for a crude tackle. Bologna coach Olivieri lamented that his side went to sleep after scoring their goal, allowing Piacenza back into the game.

Cagliari 1 Reggiana
(Pancaro 9 pen) (Pancaro 49 og)

In this clash of the cellar-dwellers, Cagliari had their turn to rue a missed chance to obtain valuable premiership points. Against bottom side Reggiana, and at home in Sardinia, Cagliari found themselves with a one goal advantage after only nine minutes, with defender Pancaro converting a penalty. However, Pancaro had the unusual and dubious honour of scoring for both sides, conceding an own goal just after half-time. Both sides were reduced to ten players when an altercation between Silva and Parente ended with both players getting their marching orders in the 44th minute. Reggiana hit the post late in the game, but this was their first away point of the season.

Florentina 4 Perugia
(Batistuta 48, (Gauferi 86) Rui Costa 62,

Oliveira 86, Rocco 90 og)

An exciting second half in Florence saw the home side crush the hapless Perugia in a five-goal flurry. Fiorentina forwards Oliveira and Batistuta, along with man-of-the-match Rui Costa, tormented the Perugia defence with numerous raids and all three found the back of the net themselves, Rui Costa scoring after dribbling half the length of the pitch and past three opponents before calmly chipping the keeper. A last-minute own goal summed up Perugia's day and the win keeps Fiorentina in touch with the Serie A leaders. Both teams had a player sent off, Allegri for Perugia for protesting his yellow card and a penalty which Batistuta missed, and Robbiau for Fiorentina for a second booking.

Lazio 0 Roma 0

The derby in Rome ended, unfortunately for the 65,000 spectators, in a mediocre draw. Lazio initiated most of the play, while Roma soaked up the pressure, managing only one shot on goal for the whole match. Form Roma forward Balbo was quiet, as was Signore for Lazio. Australia's Paul Okon played the whole game and received a reasonable rating (6) for his performance. Lazio coach Zeman fumed after the match, claiming Roma midfielder Statuto should have been sent off on two separate occasions, but was spared the early shower by generous refereeing decisions. Lazio's best chance to win fell to Fuser who had a shot rebound off the goalpost.

Milan 2 Udinese
(Savicovic 52, (Stroppa 56) Eranio 66)

Milan, with new coach Sacchi at the helm, were back in the winner's circle with a win over Udinese at the San Siro. Their midfielder Erario played impeccably, controlling the middle of the park and scoring the decisive second goal. Udinese broke back after going a goal down in the 52nd minute, and levelled four minutes later, but could not repeat that feat after the second strike. Costacurta was sent off for a second yellow card, a terrible eye-gauge on his opponent after his first booking, five minutes from the end, and must serve a two week suspension. Milan can now look forward again with confidence, whilst Udinese is in the bottom half of the table, but has a game against Juventus in hand. Noted that Baggio was not even in Milan's squad this round, their first win in nine rounds.

Napoli 1 Verona
(Milanese 90)

A single goal to Napoli full-back Milanese, a powerful strike from the edge of the penalty area deep into stoppage time at the end of the game, was enough to decide this tight encounter. Napoli continue on their winning way, but were given a scare at home by lowly Verona who has only managed one win for the season. Napoli coach Simoni has lauded his players, but is not getting carried away yet - much of the season is yet to come. They do

find themselves in fifth spot after this round, though, and only two points away from the two top teams.

Parma 0 Atalanta 0

Another tame draw, this time between two teams struggling to find some semblance of form. This was Parma's seventh week straight without a win, but played much better than in recent matches. They had the majority of possession with eight shots on goal to three, but could not beat the Atalanta keeper Pinato, who had a good day out. Their coach Ancelotti said "The next four rounds will decide if we are to suffer until this season ends".

Sampdoria 0 Juventus
(Fenara 33)

Juve defender Ferrara is shaping up as the best performing defender in Italy at the moment, with another excellent display for his team capped off by the winning goal. The away win in Genoa has reinforced claims by many that this Juventus line-up has the strength and consistency to take this years title. The team has definitely clicked and do not look like being beaten often for the remainder of this season. They are not clear of course, with Vicenza and Inter keeping pace. Sampdoria also played well (they were unbeaten in the previous six games) and managed five shots on goal, but could not beat Juve custodian Peruzzi. They had a header cleared off the line, while Juventus had a penalty claim denied with Del Piero brought down in the box by two defenders, and a free kick to Montero

hitting the post.

Vicenza 1 Inter
(Malm 19) (Djorkaeff 64 pen)

The clash between two of the better performing sides in Serie A right now finished, not unexpectedly, in a draw. Vicenza took the lead at home in the 19th minute, but were again thwarted by a penalty when Sforza was brought down in the box, and had to share the points. Inter coach Hodgson is happy with his teams continuity, particularly the outstanding display by his keeper Pagliuca who kept out eight strikes on his goal. Vicenza striker Otero could have won the game with a late missed chance.

Table (as at round 12):

Vicenza 22, Juventus 22*, Inter 21, Bologna 20, Napoli 20, Fiorentina 18, Milan 18, Roma 17, Sampdoria 16, Lazio 16, Piacenza 16, Udinese 15*, Parma 14, Atalanta 11, Cagliari 10, Verona 7, Reggiana 5.

Top Goalscorers:

9-Balbo (Roma), 8-Inzaghi (Atalanta), Luiso (Piacenza), 7-Weah (Milan), 6-Batistuta (Fiorentina), Mancini (Sampdoria), Bierhoff (Udinese), Otero (Vicenza).

Next Round (Round 13 played 15/12/96)

Atalanta v Piacenza, Inter v Sampdoria, Perugia v Lazio, Roma v Napoli, Vicenza v Parma (late game), Cagliari v Bologna, Juventus v Verona, Reggiana v Milan, Udinese v Fiorentina.



WOMEN'S WRITES

BY JANENE MAR



ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES 96/97 NATIONAL LEAGUE - ROUND TWO

NSW EDGE OUT NORTHERN RIVALS

NSW Institute of Sport 3 Northern NSW ITC 2
(Rockall 1, Powell og 33, Boyd 84) (Casagrande 52, Mehan 72)

NSW Institute of Sport came away with maximum points in the first Northern Conference round of the Ansett Australia Summer Series last Friday night at the Sydney United Sports Centre, despite the absence of two injured Australian Team members Jo Peters and Kelly Golebiowski. Scoring a late winner over fierce rivals Northern NSW ITC, the home side recorded a 3-2 victory in what was a very entertaining clash.

NSWIS immediately set its opponent on the back foot, scoring in the opening minute before anyone had a chance to settle. Midfielder Taryn Rockall got her boot in first against the advancing keeper to an invitingly loose ball played into the box, the ball hit with just enough pace to roll over the goal line.

Northern NSW came ever so close to equalising in the 19th minute as a long range shot rocked against the underside of the crossbar, but bounced on the wrong side of the line and into the safety of the keeper's hands.

But the Northerns found themselves two behind after 33 minutes. A Rockall corner was cleared back out for her to float in a

second ball into the box. A lapse of concentration saw the unchallenged NNSW defender Joanne Powell head the cross backwards into the top corner of her own net, giving NSWIS a 2-0 lead.

NNSW created two perfect chances before the break, but Shelley Youman hit the woodwork, and Kristy Mehan managing only a feeble shot from point blank range.

NSW's Rockall almost pulled off another goal in the opening seconds after kick off, her long range blast flying just wide of the mark. But it was NNSW who lifted the intensity in the second half, sending through some brilliant through balls to split open the NSWIS defence in sight of goal. One such move in the 52nd minute, saw the ball despatched from deep on the left met by Australian attacker Lisa Casagrande at full pace, and with just the keeper to beat, hit the target inside the far post from 15 metres.

Buoyed by the goal, NNSW maintained constant pressure on the home side through a speedy attack and incisive passing. The inevitable goal came in the 72nd minute, another fantastic through ball sending Kristy Mehan free to blast her shot from just inside the 18 yard box and locking the score at 2-2 with the momentum in their favour.

NSW Institute of Sport: Praszczalek, Tann-Darby, Clarke, McMurtrie, Klessattel, Davis, Hewson, Gartock, Thomson, Rockall, Boyd, Stavrou, Murray 60.
Northern NSW ITC: Carlin, Powell, Starr, Bagwell, Palozzi, McGovern, Fitzgerald (Baker 62), Randall, Youman, Casagrande, Mehan.

Youman almost scored a winner for Northern, weaving her way around two defenders only to see her shot skim the top of the crossbar.

Then against the run of play, NSWIS regained the lead in the 84th minute, international Katrina Boyd rising above her marker to meet a well-struck cross from the left, her spectacular glancing header giving the goalie no chance, to send the home team into joyous celebration.

Northern's Mehan had an excellent chance to equalise in stoppage time, but NSWIS keeper Jenny Praszczalek pulled off a superb match-saving dive at the feet of the striker in a one-on-one in front of goal, NSW holding on to record a valuable 3-2 victory.

DUNNE HAT TRICK GIVES QAS NARROW WIN

Queensland Academy of Sport 3 Northern NSW ITC 2
(Dunne 4, 14, 33) (Youman 43, 45)

Queensland Academy of Sport held off a spirited fightback from Northern NSW ITC to record a narrow 3-2 victory in Saturday afternoon's Ansett Series match at Sydney United Sports Centre.

Queensland opened the scoring in the 4th minute, their first attacking move for the match ending with a cross from the right to find the unmarked Lisa Dunne in front of goal. With the ball running past her, Dunne hooked her leg out to the side to cleverly flick the ball into goal.

Northern stuck to their plan and enjoyed the greater share of possession, but in the attacking third, found it hard to break Queensland's firm defence.

Still against the run of play, Dunne added a second goal ten minutes later. April Mann, finding herself with plenty of space ahead, ran the ball up the right wing. Her perfect cross met the head of Dunne on the run, giving

the keeper no chance.

Despite seeing less possession of the ball, Queensland sprinted further ahead with Dunne on the spot again to volley home past the keeper from 10 metres for a 3-0 lead and a hat trick to the striker inside 33 minutes against her old State.

The solid lead was all but squandered in the last three minutes of the half as a lapse in concentration allowed NNSW's Shelley Youman to score a bizarre goal from the touchline as Queensland was still organising its back line for the corner kick. The Aussie attacker found herself unchallenged and kept playing amid the Queensland confusion. From the most acute of angles, Youman curled her shot against the inside of the far post, and in.

Youman again took matters into her own hands in stoppage time before the break, perfectly striking a deft shot from 20 metres again off

Northern NSW ITC: Carlin, Powell, Starr, Palozzi, Bagwell, McGovern, Fitzgerald, Randall, Youman, Casagrande, Mehan. Subs: Nutley, Baker.
Queensland Academy of Sport: Kitching, Gegenhuber, Leake, Garven, Stork, Russell, Short, Mann, Ferguson, Dunne, Revell. Subs: Curley, Duce, Mackenzie.

the inside of the woodwork to reduce the deficit to one at 3-2, and suddenly put a new complexion on the game.

The match took on a different pattern for the entire second period, both sides playing out a dour struggle, unable to sustain any creativity to add to the scoreline. Queensland's defence thwarted the last desperate chances NNSW had for an equaliser, and the Maroons were happy to hear the final whistle signalling a valuable 3-2 victory.

NSW IS TOO STRONG OVER QAS

NSW Institute of Sport 2 Queensland Academy of Sport 1
(Boyd 4, Boyle 22) (Dunne 62)

NSW Institute of Sport were too strong a combination for the Queensland Academy of Sport, two early goals enough to take them through for a 2-1 win in Sunday's Ansett national league match in Sydney.

NSW took just four minutes to stamp its mark on the game, Australian striker Katrina Boyd running on to a lovely defence-splitting ball, and finishing with a clinical drive from 14 metres on the right to take the lead 1-0.

The home team put on a display of flowing football, composed in possession and equally solid in their defensive duties, allowing the Maroons little time on the ball. They deserved to go further ahead when in the 22nd minute, a NSW free kick was floated in from the left into the box. Forward Amanda Boyle pounced on a rebound off the QAS defence in front of goal, her scooped shot from her outstretched boot dropping just under the crossbar beyond the reach of the keeper to

NSW Institute of Sport: Praszczalek, Tann-Darby, McMurtrie, Klessattel, Davis, Hewson, Gartock (Clarke 83), Thomson, Rockall, Boyle, Boyd (Murray 77).

Queensland Academy of Sport: Kitching, Gegenhuber, Leake (Duce 65), Garven (Russell 58), Stork, Curley, Short, Mann, Ferguson, Dunne, Revell.

take the lead 2-0.

Queensland finally settled and started to shut down the opponent quicker, but their efforts in attack lacked real punch against a well marshalled NSW backline and failed to produce a goal before half time.

After the break, the match was a more laboured affair, both sides tending to lose their pattern of play and creative attacking moves. Queensland was however able to pull one back in the 62nd minute, striker Lisa Dunne adding another to her Saturday hat trick as she rose above the pack for a solid header to convert a well struck corner from the right.

NSWIS pulled out one threatening raid on goal for the half,

and made known their claims for a red card as QAS defender Kate Stork deliberately handballed to deny Boyd the ball on her way towards goal with the defence beaten. Stork received a yellow, and NSW's Rockall could only hit the resultant free kick against the Queensland wall.

Despite the close 2-1 scoreline, neither side could sustain the extra spark needed. The pace of the game picked up in the final ten minutes in Queensland's rushed attempt to draw even, but NSW's defence remained resolute, and held on to take the game 2-1. NSW's three points shoots them to the top of the Northern Conference ladder at the end of Round 2.

ANSETT AUSTRALIAN SUMMER SERIES

Top Goalscorers - After Round Two

4	Sharon Black	SASI
4	Kristy Moore	SASI
4	Lisa Dunne	QAS
2	Kathy Zacharopoulos	VIC
2	Shelley Youman	NNSW
2	Katrina Boyd	NSWIS

ROUND 3 7-9 FEBRUARY, 1997 *Melbourne*

Friday	7.00pm	VIC v ACT
Saturday	3.00pm	SA v ACT
Sunday	3.00pm	VIC v SA

JAPANESE SET TO SEND THEIR BEST

Japan has indicated their interest in sending an J-League Select Team to Australia from 5-15 March 1997, slotting in perfectly during the break between the last round of the Ansett Australia Summer Series and the playoffs.

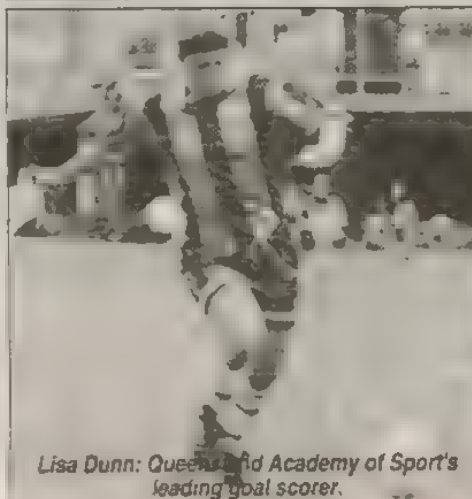
AWSA are hopeful these dates will also suit Team USA for their historic tour to our shores.

IN SEARCH FOR TOP COACH

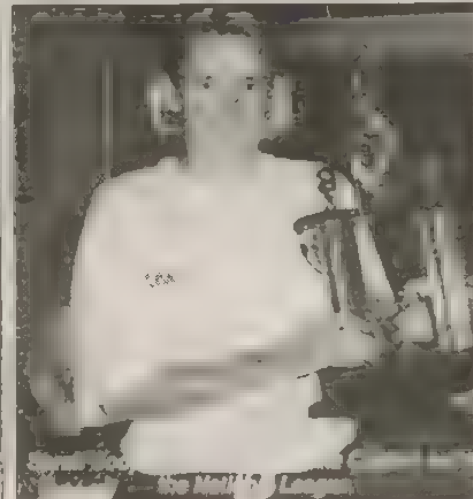
The AWSA Board members held discussions during the Canberra leg of the national league with the aim of setting out their strategy for finding a new National Coach with the departure of Tom Sermann to Japan.

As a result, the net is being cast both locally and overseas in the search for a coach with the credentials worthy of taking on the national position.

Considerations of the position being taken on by a 'caretaker' for the return of Sermann after two years were quashed by the Board as not being in the interests of the sport nor the new coach.



Lisa Dunn: Queensland Academy of Sport's leading goal scorer.



League Tables - North Conference AFTER ROUND 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
NSW	2	2	0	0	5	3	2	6
QLD	2	1	0	1	4	4	0	3
Northern NSW	2	0	0	2	4	6	-2	0

League Tables - South Conference AFTER ROUND 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
SA	2	2	0	0	8	2	6	6
VIC	2	1	0	1	4	7	-3	3
ACT	2	0	0	2	2	5	-3	0



SOUTH AMERICA

— COMPILED BY MARIO ETCHART —



A YEAR OF SUCCESS FOR ARGENTINE CLUBS IN S.A.

1996 was a year of success for the Argentine clubs in South America, with River Plate, Velez Sarsfield and Lanus winning the three major continental tournaments: the Libertadores Cup, the Supercup and the Conmebol Cup.

River Plate, who's leading the current Argentine soccer league first phase in style, won the Libertadores Cup for the second time in its history. The 'millionaires', as they are nicknamed in the country, played four finals in thirty years, winning two and losing two.

In 1966, after an epic final, River went down 4-2 in extra time against the great Penarol of Uruguay in Santiago, Chile, in the third and decisive match.

In 1976 Cruzeiro of Brazil took the championship from River Plate, but in 1986, the Argentines scored their first major international victory, beating America of Colombia in the final.

And in 1996 River Plate

went to win the championship, once again, beating America of Colombia.



LANUS IN ITS MOMENT OF GLORY

Lanus, a club not considered among the Argentine "elite", became the revelation of the current Argentine soccer league first phase, bringing a fresh and a different approach to the local competition.

A blend of experience and youth produced one of the most talented and skilful teams of the league.

A team who plays an attacking style, with flair, with enjoyment, and with little respect for the opposition Lanus became, together with River Plate, the crowd favourites.

The squad, coached by former Ferro Carril Oeste's

defender Hector Cuper, won its first championship at any level in its history: the Conmebol Cup, the third tournament in importance at club level in South America.

Lanus defeated Independiente Santa Fe of Colombia by goal difference in the finals, winning 2-0 in Buenos Aires and going down 1-0 in Bogota.

The class of Argentine international players like midfielders Hugo Morales and Ariel Ibagaza and strikers Coyette and Lopez, plus the experience of Serrizuela, Falashi and Siviero in defence, were instrumental in Lanus' success.

UNIVERSIDAD OF CHILE IN SEARCH OF A NEW COACH

After a discreet campaign during the 1996 Chilean national league, Universidad of Chile, winner of the previous two seasons under the guidance of former coach Jorge Sotias, is looking for a coach after the resignation of Argentine tactician Miguel Angel Russo.

Former Chilean national coach Arturo Salah, who was recently sacked by Mexican first division club Monterrey because of poor results in the current season, is one of the candidates to take over from Russo.

The other candidates are the Argentines Hector Veira and Oscar Malbernat; Roberto Hernandez, the current coach of Audax Italiano, and Paraguayan Rogelio Delgado.

Veira coached San Lorenzo of Argentina while Malbernat was in charge of Chilean team Provincial Osorno, and Rogelio Delgado, a former player of Universidad of Chile, was assistant coach of Gustavo Benitez at Colo Colo.

The decision will be made during the next few days. But the club will lose some of its

most important players.

Former Argentine international midfielder Leonardo Rodriguez has been transferred to Mexican club America for a reported 1.5 million dollars while another midfielder, Chilean international Esteban Valencia, has been linked with a club of the new North American soccer league.



CHILEAN SOCCER

Cobreloa is one step away from a berth in the 1997 Libertadores Cup after its 3-2 victory over Universidad Catolica. The match, for the Chilean Pre Libertadores league, was played at Cobreloa's Calama stadium 2,300 metres above sea level.

Argentine midfielder Ricardo Lunari put Catolica 1-0 in front after nine minutes, but Cobreloa equalised in the 29th through a powerful free kick from striker Erick Guerrero.

Cobreloa, playing with 10 men since the 31st minute when its defender Pedro Jaque was sent off for an illegal tackle against Catolica's striker Luis Perez, were 2-1 ahead with a goal from Jaime Riveros in the 57th.

Two minutes later Catolica lost striker Anibal Gonzalez, sent off after elbowing Cobreloa's defender Hector Puebla. And in the 73rd Lunari levelled the scoreline.

However, one minute before the end of the match,

Jaime Riveros beat Catolica goalkeeper Nelson Tapia with another well placed free kick, giving Cobreloa a deserved 3-2 victory.

The return match will be played at Universidad Catolica's San Carlos de Apoquindo stadium, in Santiago, tomorrow Wednesday.

Meanwhile Palestino, who thrashed Iquique 5-1, and Temuco, who beat Cobresal 2-0, won promotion to first division, and the legendary Santiago Morning won the third division championship.

Santiago Morning, one of the founders of the Chilean Football Federation, was a powerful club during the 1940s and 1950s winning several Chilean national championships during those years.



VELEZ SARSFIELD AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

Velez Sarsfield has achieved the greatest success in its history during the last four years, winning The Libertadores Cup and the Toyota Cup in 1994, and the Supercup this year after defeating Cruzeiro of Brazil. Adding to that, four Argentine league titles.

The example of Velez Sarsfield must be one to follow. The club under the guidance of coach Carlos Bianchi until the middle of this year, before taking the coaching position with Italian club AC Roma, had a simple policy: promote its own players from the youth divisions.

In four years they sold several players, among them: Pompei, Jose Flores, Basualdo and Trotta, all stars in their own right. But Velez never bought a player from other clubs; all of them were replaced by their own talented youngsters.

A legacy left to the new coach Osvaldo Piazza, who, so far continued with the same project and won the Supercup.



ARGENTINE SOCCER LEAGUE

River Plate came back strongly from its defeat against Juventus in the Toyota Cup winning its last three matches. The first one by 4 goals to 0 against San Lorenzo. The second by 4-3, in a thriller, against Racing Club, and the last one, against Newell's Old Boys, finished 3-1 in favour of the current leaders.

Playing without six of its most important footballers, because of their commitment with the Argentine national team, River showed that it is a class above the rest.

Talented youngster Santiago Solari, twice, and midfielder Roberto Monserrat scored for the winner, while former Argentine

international midfielder Julio Saldana pulled one back for Newell's.

In the local derby, Independiente defeated San Lorenzo, 2-0, a victory that kept Menotti's team in the fight for the championship. Angel Morales and Jose Luis Calderon scored for the "red devils".

Meanwhile, Boca Juniors, the big spender in the league, thrashed Platense 4-1 and Racing Club drew 1-1 with Ferro Carril Oeste.

Other results: Banfield 0 Estudiantes de La Plata 1, Union 1 Colon 1, Velez Sarsfield 0 Huracan of Corrientes 3, Huracan 2 Gimnasia y Esgrima of Jujuy 3, Deportivo Espanol 2 Rosario Central 3.

Team	P	D	N	L	G	A	P
River Plate	16	13	1	2	46	18	40
Independiente	17	10	1	3	29	18	34
Lanus	16	9	5	2	21	12	32
Racing Club	17	8	8	4	30	23	29
San Lorenzo	17	8	5	6	23	20	23
Boca Juniors	17	7	8	6	34	20	23
Rosario Central	17	6	7	4	28	25	25
Velez Sarsfield	17	6	8	6	29	28	23
Newell's Old Boys	17	6	8	7	23	26	22
Platense	17	5	8	6	24	26	21
Gimnasia Jujuy	17	5	8	6	16	18	21
Estudiantes La Plata	17	6	5	8	22	25	21
Gimnasia La Plata	16	5	8	6	13	16	20
Colon	17	4	8	5	19	24	20
Ferro Carril Oeste	17	4	8	7	30	34	18
Huracan	17	3	7	7	20	32	16
Huracan Corrientes	16	3	7	6	24	30	16
Union	17	4	8	9	22	27	16
Deportivo Espanol	17	2	8	7	13	22	14
Banfield	12	3	8	10	11	31	13

UK SOCCER SUPPORTERS DOWNUNDER



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Nearly for Leeds

Plenty of action taking place at Leeds United these days as George Graham lands his first signing after the infamous 'bung affair' of two years back.

Graham signed 31 year old Gunnar Halle from Oldham for 400,000 after being frustrated in their attempts to sign John Scales from Liverpool. The Norwegian international was about to be signed by Howard Wilkinson before his departure from the Elland Road club but recently Halle has said that this was to be his last season in English football.

Scales, 30, actually signed for Tottenham for 2.6m when it appeared cut and dried a move to Yorkshire was on the cards and as always happens, Spurs will have played Leeds at the weekend. He said: "It could be a tricky weekend for me but coming home on the train last night I made up my mind to sign for Tottenham and I felt happy with that."

This was in stark contrast to the Friday evening when addressing the Leeds supporters: "It's very exciting. The success George Graham

had at Highbury and throughout his career make him a great manager. I admire him greatly. I'm here at Leeds to put my career back on track. I've got a lot of faith in Leeds United and George Graham and I am very pleased." Scales would have been rejoining the side he left 11 years ago on a free transfer.

He concluded that he was looking forward to training with Tottenham and wanted a good week's work with the side after being out injured with a groin injury.

Brighter news for the Elland Road faithful is that they are now chasing Polish International Marek Citko from Widzew Lodz. The player sprang into the news with goals against Atletico Madrid and Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League as well as scoring against England at Wembley recently. But, he was one of five players sent home early from Cyprus by national coach Antoni Piechniczek where Poland were to play in a friendly. There has been no news as to why the players were given the early bath.

Brighton...

Brighton have been docked two points by the FA after two pitch invasions by protesting fans in October. Bottom placed at the time the club are now some 11 points adrift the pack in Division Three with the real possibility of them playing in the GM Vauxhall Conference next season.

Stevenage Borough would probably take their place in

the league and a good test of what they could possibly do will be when facing Birmingham City at home in the 3rd round of the FA Cup on January 4th or 5th.



Carling Premier League — yeh!

The Premier League has signed a new 36 million pound deal with brewers BASS in the UK - 200% more than the original four year deal - to sponsor the Carling Premiership for a further term.

League Chief Rick Parry said it could have been a lot more as other companies are falling over themselves to sign on the dotted line but the clubs wanted continuity and voted unanimously to extend the contract.

This came on top of a new deal with Sky/BBC that amounted to a figure of over 740 million being handed over for the rights to Premiership football. However, the

league have decided to give the other 72 league clubs a hand by giving them 30 million on the basis that the money is not used for the everyday running of the clubs.

The Premiership sides have revealed that their commercial income has far and away outstripped all expectations and want the extra money from sponsorship deals to be invested in the upgrading of the smaller grounds and on youth development.

The fat cats at least realise that without the young talent coming through from grass-roots level, their magical dreamland cannot possibly survive intact.



Style, skill and determination are all used to describe the unique footballing talents that were Liverpool in their heyday, the very attributes that made the club one of the most feared around the world let alone England and Europe. This book looks at the special talents of some of those who made European glory and the continuous domination of the English league possible.

The author, David Walmsley, has selected fifty of Anfield's finest players since the war and examines each one in great detail. Whilst there can be no argument over the majority of the selections, some may open their eyes and demand debate, such is the nature of the beast.

Some of the players mentioned are

by now household names throughout the globe: Dalglish, Rush, Souness, Keegan, Beardsley, St John etc but what of: Ron Yeats, Bob Paisley, Gerry Byrne, Albert Stubbins from the past or Fowler and McManaman of today? ALL are featured including their contributions to the club at time of going to press of course.

Revealing anecdotes, dynamite photographs, statistical records and memorable moments are all featured within the pages which makes the book a definite for all followers of Liverpool and for connoisseurs of this great game.

ISBN 0-7472-1870-6 is the number to give your local bookstores and with Christmas just around the corner, give this one some thought. Literally superb!

Futre Retires

After all the to-ing and fro-ing from Harry Redknapp about the future of former Portuguese international Paulo Futre at West Ham, it was revealed from Lisbon this week that he has been forced to retire from the game due to injury at the age of 30.

Capped 40 times by his country, Redknapp remarked: "It's a sad blow to lose him, but I'm not surprised. He has been a fantastic player, absolutely world class. When I took him on it was a gamble. He had a knee injury but I wanted to see if he could get himself fit to play in the Premier League. He had several outstanding games for us and turned one or two when he came on as a sub. His ability, pace and dribbling skills were second to none. He was some player."

Futre played for many clubs during his career including: Sporting Lisbon, Atletico Madrid, Benfica, Marseille, Reggiana and AC Milan before the move to London. We wish him well.



Partnerships in training

Arsene Wenger took a private trip to the Riviera last week and came back with the possibility of an Arsenal and Cannes partnership for training young players. He said: "The two clubs are about to sign a partnership in the field of training and talent spotting." The French 1st Division side has produced a number of talented lads through their youth programme like Patrick Vieira who is now at Arsenal via AC Milan.

It's believed Man Utd were looking at a similar style deal with Inter Milan of the Italian Serie A.



Arsene Wenger: Trip to French Riviera bears fruit.

The Wanderer returns

"I was born under a wandering star," could well become the theme tune for Middlesbrough's roaming Brazilian Emerson in the near future. After finally returning from his homeland for the third time in a month, British Customs officials have seen more of him than the fans at the Riverside! This situation cannot continue for much longer in all honesty and one of the two parties must back down and either he stays and pulls his finger out for the team or the club allow him to be sold.

Emerson cites that his wife cannot adjust to the north east weather and it's making her quite ill. Much as this is a great shame for the lady, one can only suggest she wait until January before she can appreciate the true extent of what she could be in for?



Interesting to see Fernando Nelson of Aston Villa state: "It's not just a case of looking at a club and what they do. Players should look at the city they will be based in and the way of life. That's what I did. I went into things thoroughly before agreeing to sign for Villa."

Nelson has been capped five times by Portugal and berated those 'foreign imports' who complained about the British game and lifestyle and continued: "If players come over here and they find they don't like the way football is played, it's wrong to complain. I am trying to adapt to the English way and believe I'm improving but it's important foreign players adapt to their club - not the other way around!" It appears this lad has his head screwed on the right way at least.

French Racing Ace?

David Ginola has said he wants to give up football and revealed this may be his last season with Newcastle because he wants to try his luck at big-time motor racing. The 29 year old gave a clear indication of what lay ahead when saying: "It is not easy to come to another country and work because you miss your family and friends and your normal way of life. Sometimes I miss home."

That's a word statement or perhaps ALL motor races take place in France? Perhaps the Adelaide/Melbourne Grand Prix really is in Paris, which is why no-one recognises the streets as the cars whizz by? Perhaps Nigel Mansell races by remote control from his Isle of Man home? Perhaps young David is pulling someone's chain?

Southampton

Both Southampton and Sunderland have been looking at floating the clubs on the Stock Market with the latter actually taking the step. Sunderland Chairman Bob Murray became worth almost 19m on paper after the float following a decision against selling the club for just 2m, two years ago. A quarter of the stock was released - around 2 million shares - and the minimum investment to the public was 585 pounds, the price of 100 shares exactly.

Director and Chief executive at Roker Park John Fickling said: "The club is now valued at 47.7 million pounds and we can now rub shoulders on the pitch with Manchester United and Tottenham." Oh really?

Southampton plan to float the club in order to release 3 million pounds to manager Graeme Souness for new players. The club will be taken over by Secure Retirement, a Bristol based property development and healthcare company. Perhaps the players will get a grannie flat on retirement from the dell?

HAMILTON ACADEMICAL

BY STUART JONES

Ground: Firhill Park (groundsharing with Partick Thistle)
Address: 80 Firhill Road, Glasgow G20 7BA
Railway Station: Douglas Park, Douglas Park Lane, Hamilton, ML30DP
Founded: 1874
Admitted to League: 1897
Ground Capacity: 20,676
Seats: 9,076
Pitch Size: 110 yd x 74 yd
Largest Gate: 28,690 v Hearts, Scottish Cup 3rd Rd 3 Mar 1937
Biggest Win: 11-1 v Chryston, Lanarkshire Cup, 28 Nov 1885
Heaviest Defeat: 1-11 v Hibernian, Div 1; 6 November 1965
Nickname: The Accies
Colours: Red and White hoops
Honours: League: first Division 1985-86, 1987-88
 Division Two: 1903-4
 B and Q Cup Winners: 1991-92, 1992-93.

History: The club originated from Hamilton Academy and began playing at Bent Farm. They moved to South Haugh, and had a brief spell at South Avenue, before moving to a ground which was to be home for 100 years, Douglas Park. They are currently ground sharing at Firhill Park with Partick Thistle.

In March 1971 Gwardia Warsaw of Poland played the team under floodlights, the first time they had been switched on at Douglas Park. In 1970 the club almost ceased to exist. They were financially crippled and after finishing bottom of the second division had resigned from the League. They had failed to fulfil their first two League fixtures. Four rebel directors won control of the club and reclaimed membership of the League. So any games in 1971 were minor miracles, let alone a game against a European opponent under lights.

In 1986 the club attained Premier League status, a fantastic achievement. Since then things have declined and last season the club was relegated from the First Division. However this season they are battling well enough to possibly bounce back up at the first attempt.

WIMBLEDON RECKON TYSON FOR TITLE

Wimbledon players just aren't used to being as high as second in the English Premier League standings. When asked about the title, they have the same stock answer.

"We reckon Mike Tyson will win it back." The joke is that no-one really believes that Wimbledon is likely to win the English league title. The idea of the team of uncompromising, tough-tackling south Londoners taking on soccer aristocrats such as Juventus, Real Madrid and Ajax in the Champions Cup next season seems laughable.

"It's crazy to think about the title and, anyway, we're



not the sort of lads that give it big-time chat," said Nigerian international striker Efan Ekoku, who scored twice in last week's 3-1 win at Sunderland.

"But we're the No.1 battlers so anyone who can outdo us is going to have to work hard." Wimbledon's aren't a pretty team to watch although they appear to have at last abandoned their tediously predictable, long-ball style of play.

The whole team plays aggressively and stop their opponents stringing passes together by tackling them almost as soon as they've received the ball.

Weird and Wonderful

BY STUART JONES

1893-94

This season finally saw Aston Villa, whose committee member William McGregor had originally sought to found the Football League, win the First Division title. They lost one home game all season. Sunderland were runners up after their previous season's success. At the bottom of the table Newton Heath came last yet again, but this time they did not survive in the test matches. New boys Darwen came second last and also failed in the test matches. However the big shock was Preston finishing third last after all their previous success. By defeating Notts County they did survive in the top flight though. Liverpool and Small Heath won promotion to the top flight for the next season, they had finished first and second in the Second Division, followed by Notts County. All test matches that season were played at independent venues and were one off games. Northwich Victoria finished bottom of the Football League.

Accrington and Bootle had resigned from the League and new members included Liverpool, Newcastle United, and Woolwich Arsenal. Two others joined, Rotherham Town, who play in the third division today, and Middlesbrough Ironopolis (they were a breakaway of current Middlesbrough). Ironopolis had been formed four years previously and despite not going poorly, played only a few years in the League as the city was not big enough for two professional teams. They had been nicknamed "The Washers".

The FA Cup that season saw Notts County defeat Blackburn Rovers and Bolton Wanderers defeat Sheffield Wednesday in the semi-finals. The final was played at Goodison Park in Liverpool in front of 37,000 people. By half time it was 2-0 to County and just before full time Logan scored a further two goals to become the second man to have put away a hat trick of goals in the FA Cup Final. Right on full time Bolton scored a very lucky goal, Toone slipping presenting Bolton with a consolation goal. Notts County had won the FA Cup for the first time.

In Scotland Celtic won the League for a second successive year. They finished on 30 points, 4 clear of second place Hearts and 7 in front of St Bernard's. In the Scottish FA Cup, Rangers and Celtic faced each other in the Final for the first time. Rangers won 3-1 to stop Celtic doing the Scottish double.

LEAGUE TABLES

DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	T
Aston Villa	30	14	1	0	47	17	6	4	5	31	28	45		
Derby Co	30	12	2	1	42	13	5	5	5	26	22	41		
Everton	30	10	4	1	40	17	6	3	6	26	26	39		
Bolton W	30	12	2	1	34	14	4	3	8	15	23	37		
Sunderland	30	10	5	0	36	14	5	2	8	16	27	37		
Stoke	30	12	0	3	43	11	3	0	12	13	36	30		
Sheffield W	30	10	2	3	31	18	2	3	10	13	35	29		
Blackburn R	30	10	1	4	26	18	2	4	9	14	32	29		
Preston NE	30	8	5	2	31	18	3	1	11	13	30	28		
Burnley	30	8	5	2	33	11	2	2	11	15	33	27		
Bury	30	7	1	7	32	24	5	2	8	18	30	27		
Sheffield U	30	9	4	2	28	12	1	2	12	12	38	26		
Nottingham F	30	11	1	3	34	16	0	2	13	8	41	25		
Wolves	30	10	0	5	43	18	0	1	14	18	47	21		
Small Heath	30	7	2	6	22	24	1	2	12	17	55	20		
WBA	30	5	4	6	18	22	1	3	11	12	37	19		

DIVISION 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	T
Liverpool	30	14	1	0	65	11	8	1	6	41	21	46		
Ardwick	30	12	3	0	37	9	9	1	5	26	29	46		
Grimsby T	30	14	1	0	51	9	6	1	8	31	29	42		
Burton W	30	12	1	2	43	15	7	3	5	26	25	42		
Newcastle U	30	14	0	1	57	14	2	2	11	16	36	34		
Newton Heath	30	12	2	1	48	15	3	1	11	18	42	33		
W Arsenal	30	11	1	3	42	11	3	3	9	16	31	32		
Leicester F	30	10	0	5	40	16	4	4	7	17	28	32		
Darwen	30	9	4	2	55	22	3	2	10	17	45	30		
Notts Co	30	8	1	6	41	22	4	1	10	16	32	26		
Burton S	30	7	2	6	24	26	3	2	10	15	43	24		
Loughboro T	30	7	3	5	32	25	2	2	11	8	41	23		
Lincoln C	30	7	1	7	36	24	2	3	10	17	51	22		
Burslem PV	30	6	4	5	25	24	1	0	14	18	54	18		
Rotherham T	30	7	2	6	27	26	0	1	14	7	71	17		
we A	30	5	2	8	22	28	0	1	14	8	67	13		

Clough seriously ill

Former Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough, the most influential manager of his generation, reportedly is seriously ill in a private hospital.

Clough, who won two European Cups while in charge at Nottingham, was admitted to the clinic suffering from a severe kidney condition after collapsing a week ago, the

Sun newspaper said.

The paper said he was undergoing a course of drugs as part of treatment for alcohol-related illness and depression. It also claimed he was admitted under the name Brian Gladstone.

Clough, who also managed Derby County and had brief spells at Brighton and Leeds, retired from football three years ago.



HILLSBOROUGH DAMAGES AWARD

A Liverpool football fan has been awarded \$418,000 in damages from the police for the stress caused by his half-brother's death in the Hillsborough stadium disaster of 1989.

Teenager Ian Glover was one of 96 Liverpool

supporters killed in a crush at an FA Cup semi-final game against Nottingham Forest at the stadium in Sheffield, northern England.

John McCarthy, 35, had given Glover, his half-brother, the ticket for the game. He had a seat in a different part of

the ground, and could only look on as the 96 were crushed to death in an overcrowded area of terracing.

"The events of that day are imprinted not only indelibly in the minds of the citizens of Liverpool but also of the nation. It was a horrendous

event," Justice Michael Sachs said, giving the High Court verdict.

He awarded damages against the chief constable of the South Yorkshire force, responsible for policing the match, for the post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by McCarthy. The tragedy was the subject of a controversial television drama, screened on December 5, which revived calls for a new public inquiry into police conduct at Hillsborough and greater compensation for relatives of the dead.

UK STORIES

Bosnich to be spared?

Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich expects to be spared from international duty when new Socceroo coach Terry Venables starts work next month.

Former England manager Venables is due in Australia early next month to take charge of the Socceroos in a four-nation series against Norway, New Zealand and South Korea. Venables, has said that he was hoping for overseas-based Australian players to be involved in the series.

But Bosnich, due to resume from injury with English Premier League club Aston Villa on Sunday, said he had been told the matches would be a chance for the Australian-based players to show their credentials.

"It's not the best time of the year for us, but at the end of the day if we were really required we would play," Bosnich said.

"But I think commonsense will prevail and it will be a chance for the Aussie-based boys to stake their claim."

Bosnich, undoubtedly the highest profile Australian in British football, has yet to talk to Venables, who officially takes over from Eddie Thomson on January 1. But he

has met in England with Socceroo assistant coach Raul Blanco, who visited recently to brief Venables.

The new coach only plans to spend four months a year in Australia and a lot of his time will be spent monitoring the form of Australians playing in British and European competitions.

Bosnich said despite the numbers of Australians overseas, the players involved in the National League were still selection contenders for the campaign to qualify for the 1998 World Cup in France.

"Everybody deserves a chance," he said. "No matter where you're playing or what you're doing, if you can do the job that gets us to the World Cup you should be in the team, simple as that."

Bosnich has had a wretched season and knee injuries have restricted him to four appearances, including the infamous match against Tottenham in October where he ran foul of authorities, for a foolish Nazi salute.

However should Bosnich be too unfit to play then there is always Mark Schwarzer with Bradford City or Zeljko Kalac from Sydney United not forgetting the consistent Brett Hughes with Wollongong.



Mark Bosnich: Not expecting to be picked for Optus Series

DRIVING BAN ON GINOLA

Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan put his foot down to stop his French winger David Ginola from taking up motor racing.

Ginola, featured in a new Renault advertisement on television, had been talking to the car manufacturers about racing in next year's British touring car championship and was set to test drive a car with leading Swiss driver Alain Menu soon.

However, he had acknowledged that the English premier league club's insurance policy might prevent him from fulfilling his wish and Keegan quickly confirmed that.

"As long as he's got a contract with this club he won't be driving racing cars," said Keegan. "He's already been refused permission and he'll be refused permission again."

"David Ginola can drive racing cars when he decides to pack in football. But he certainly won't be allowed to test-drive racing cars while I'm manager of this club, and I think he knows that."

"We must not get carried away with these things. It's a publicity stunt for the launch of a television commercial."



David Ginola: Had brakes put on his motor racing ambitions.

BRAWL SEES MUSCAT DISMISSED

Crystal Palace's Australian international defender Kevin Muscat (right) was sent off for a foul which precipitated a brawl in the final minutes of their 1-1 draw at Norwich in an English First Division match on Saturday.

Muscat's foul on Norwich City's Darren Eadie prompted an incredible free for all that involved virtually every player on the pitch, including both goalkeepers.

When the dust had settled after well over a minute, referee Kevin Lynch sent off Muscat for his second

bookable offence and also singled out Palace skipper Ray Houghton from among the melee for another red card. Nine-man Palace then survived a torrid last few minutes before claiming a point they deserved.

Neil Shipperley put Palace ahead in the third minute after exchanging passes with another Australian international Carl Veart only for Neil Adams' 71st-minute free-kick salvaged a point for Norwich. Veart had a fierce drive come back off the upright early in the first half.



Good omen for Liverpool

Liverpool avoided the big names in the European Cup Winners Cup quarter final draw when they were matched against Norway's SK Brann.

Now they have a good chance to move closer to a final venue which has been kind to English clubs. English teams have won the past two Cup Winners Cup finals in Rotterdam (Everton in 1985 and Manchester United in '91) as well as winning the first one to be staged there back in 1963 (Tottenham). This season's final is May 14.

When the Champions Cup was last held in Rotterdam, it also was won by an English club, Aston Villa, in 1982.

While Barcelona face AIK Solna of Sweden, Benfica meet Fiorentina and defending champion Paris Saint Germain host AEK Athens in the first leg on March 6.



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